

INSIDE

Your quality Australian weekly soccer paper for the new millennium

SOCCER

Registered with Australia Post as a publication PP224696/00050 - ISSN 1321-8980

January 11, 2000. \$3.00

SOUTH SHOW WORLD NSL IS CREDIBLE



Australian club soccer - in fact Australia - should be proud of South Melbourne. In their opening two games of the World Club Championships - against Vasco and Necaxa - South has demonstrated an admirable commitment, a pleasing level of composure and skill on the ball, and have kept their shape despite the obvious quality of the opposition and the stifling humidity in Rio.

In short, the world has been given a sneak peak at Australian club football's representatives - many for the first time - and given the low expectations held, some may have even been impressed.

South certainly took the, at times patronising, English TV commentators by surprise with their stronger than expected pedigree.

Some of Trimboli and Curcija's touches; Clarkson and Panopoulos' overall work-rate and distribution; Orlic, Blatsis and Liparoti's (who had a stomach bug for game two) defensive nous and Iosifidis and De Amici's masterly wing-back displays were just some of the stand-out performances.

And the hitherto unknown keeper Chris Jones covered himself in glory with some wonderful stops, despite slight problems with crosses.

The anticipated cricket scores tipped by some (one local journalist saying off the record he expected South to be slaughtered after seeing Vasco demolish the Algerian Olympic side in a lead-up game) simply did not materialize.

South's slightly more adventurous system against Necaxa (they reverted to a flat back four from a five-man defence with wing-backs De Amici and Iosifidis who covered the central three against Vasco) was quickly found out on the

flanks, with the wide Alagich exploited ruthlessly by the first time 'give-and-go' of the typically skillful Mexicans at a disappointingly empty Maracana.

Still, South weathered the storm and achieved a small goal of getting on the scoresheet at this tournament.

South goes into their final game of the tournament, against Manchester United tonight in Brazil (tomorrow morning our time), with the benefit of three days rest and in the knowledge that whatever happens, they, unlike their English opponents, will leave this tournament with their reputations enhanced.

And this is something money cannot buy, although South will be handsomely rewarded to the tune of a couple of million.

The tournament also has ramifications for our league and its current restructuring plans, due to go ahead at the start of next season.

For clubs in our NSL - where the intensity simply is not there week-in-week-out - this tournament was always going to be a big ask, and we were found out, particularly in the first half against Necaxa.

48 hours rest simply was not enough time for 'Ange's Anzacs' to recover from the rigours of game one against Romario, Edmundo and Co. in front of that invigorating Maracana crowd.

You can argue the point but fewer teams will engender a stronger more intense and hard-edged NSL - and that's got to be good for our next representatives at this tournament, which, at this point will be in two years' time.

Last week coach Postecoglou told Inside Soccer's Greg Blake 'we won't let you down.'

South haven't.

More on page seven

Plus: THE MATILDAS, NAHUEL ARRARTE, STEVE HORVAT, OLYROOS, AUSSIES ABROAD, SUPER LEAGUE, GREG BLAKE, NSL AND NYL



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Olympic 2000 Special

OLYROO Joe Didulica

Learning from the best at Ajax

By Roy Hay

Twenty two-year-old Ajax reserve keeper Joey Didulica may be the next in a distinguished line of Australian keepers to reach the top in Europe. Following Mark Bosnich, John Filan, Zeljko Kalac, Frank Juric and Mark Schwarzer is no easy matter, but the Geelong-born youngster is at the right place to learn his trade.

Didulica is no overnight sensation. He toured Argentina with a Victorian development squad as a twelve-year old midfielder and was still running around the park when North Geelong played in the National Youth League in the early 1990s, though he filled in as keeper when required.

It was during his first full season in goals with North seniors in the Victorian Premier League in 1996, when he won the goalkeeper of the year award, that he really awakened up to the fact that he could succeed and make a career between the sticks.

At the end of the season he was snapped up by the Melbourne Knights. Stand-out performances in the following years led to his selection for the Australian youth and Olyroo squads, yet he had to play second fiddle to Perth Glory keeper Danny Milosevic.

During the last NSL recess, Didulica went to England for trials with Charlton plus he visited Manchester United where he was entertained by Teddy Sheringham and David Beckham and family.

A brief visit to Ajax followed but the youngster then had to join the Olyroos for a series of matches against Tunisia. Returning to Australia it seemed as if negotiations for an overseas contract had fallen through when Didulica got the call to return to Amsterdam to sign for Ajax.

Since then he has been the regular reserve keeper at Ajax, second in line to senior keeper Fred Grim, who in turn was understudy to local legend Edwin van der Saar and Stanley Menzo.

Van der Saar is now at Juventus and Menzo has retired so the way is open for Didulica to challenge for the top spot. Menzo spends time working with the goalkeepers and Didulica says, "Hopefully he can show me a few tricks."

The Geelong-born gloveman spent Christmas and New Year with his family and he talked about what the move to Dutch super-club Ajax had meant to him.

"You go from training four times a week to training seven times. You have everything you need. We have a weight room and world class indoor halls."

"Whatever you want you've got. So there is no reason not to improve to your maximum level."

Attention to skills and detail is phenomenal and the young keeper has been working at remodelling his kicking with either foot.



Dutch-based Olyroo keeper Joe Didulica: "People are watching your every move at training," he said about his career at Ajax. Pic by Roy Hay.

"I always had a bit of a curl on my kicks. I've always been told, when you get a back pass under pressure, kick as long as possible - long, high to the strikers. But since I went to Ajax they want me to kick it hard and direct without any curls so the strikers can run on to balls or hold it up nicely."

"Now when you play the games, you realise that pass went 50 metres direct with my left foot."

"People are watching your every move at training, it is vital and they ask questions if you don't put in every time. If you are not sprinting as fast, they ask you why. It is a great system."

"Your first touch has to be perfect. In order to get to number one I have to get to the stage where the club is confident I can handle the pressure in front of 60,000 people watching."

"You have to get the technique right, then you have to get the consistency."

Didulica already faces the club-versus-country dilemma of all the European stars. Ajax is not keen for him to be away for four weeks on Olyroo duty and the problem will be more acute in September when the Olympics occur in the middle of the European league season.

Sometimes people forget just what sacrifices and choices our top class soccer players have to make.

Coach Raul Blanco has included fourteen overseas players in the squad of 20 including two keepers, Didulica and Peter Zois - who both ply their trade in Holland - for the current tournament in Adelaide.

Inside Soccer's Greg Blake will be in Adelaide for the tournament. Read next week for his in-depth look at our Olyroos just nine months out from the Olympics. More Olyroos on page nine of this issue.

Meanwhile Roy Hay also reports that former Melbourne Knights and Hajduk Split sweeper and Socceroo Steve Horvat has been training at Carlton since early this season as he seeks to end his spell in soccer limbo.

Horvat had set his heart on playing in the English Premier League and thought he had the opportunity of doing so when Terry Venables, then coaching the Socceroos, recommended him to Crystal Palace.

Work permit problems bedevilled his attempt to play there and eventually Horvat was picked up by Fulham, then managed by Kevin Keegan who went on to take the England coaching job.

Once again work permit problems prevented Horvat taking the field and eventually he returned to Australia.

To keep fit he has been turning out on the track with Carlton, which would be keen to sign the twenty-eight year old, but Hajduk Split apparently seek a transfer fee for the player. Carlton general manager Lou Sticca said this week.

"We have a large and settled squad, but obviously a player of Steve Horvat's quality would add a great deal."

Horvat has not given up his hopes of joining a top European club but every month out of the game makes that a little more difficult. It is intensely frustrating for a player who should be at the peak of his career.

INSIDE SOCCER

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Publisher: Inside Soccer Pty Ltd
A.C.N. 088 107 822

Printing: Apex Printers Arncliffe NSW Tel: (02) 9597 6866

Distribution: Wrapaway, Marrickville NSW Tel: (02) 9550 1622

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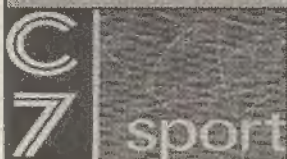
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30/8/2000	INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY	AUSTRALIA
2/9/2000	INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY	AUSTRALIA
6/9/2000	INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY	AUSTRALIA
	SYDNEY OLYMPICS 2000	
13/9/2000	WOMEN'S FOOTBALL GROUP GAMES	CANBERRA/MELB
14/9/2000	WOMEN'S FOOTBALL GROUP GAMES	CANBERRA/MELB
16/9/2000	WOMEN'S FOOTBALL GROUP GAMES	SYDNEY/CANBERRA
17/9/2000	WOMEN'S FOOTBALL GROUP GAMES	CANBERRA/MELB
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20/9/2000	WOMEN'S FOOTBALL GROUP GAMES	CANBERRA/MELB
24/9/2000	WOMEN'S FOOTBALL SEMI-FINAL	SYDNEY/CANBERRA
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GREG BLAKE
C7 SOCCER COMMENTATOR
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Hands on hearts, raise the flag and cue the anthem; South Melbourne were bloody marvellous.

If the sight of an Australian CLUB team standing on the world footballing stage - as Ange Postecoglou's mob did last Friday morning (AEST) for their opening World Club Championship game against Vasco da Gama - didn't move you and didn't set the pulse racing, you're probably reading the wrong newspaper.

Surely even the most parochial of opposition NSL fans would have choked up when 'Advance Australia Fair' boomed around the Maracana.

There wasn't a dry eye in my squat.

The result wasn't too flash, but it wasn't the drubbing even some of South Melbourne's so-called faithful predicted.

It didn't matter anyway really; they were there and about a billion other people around the world weren't, but wished they were.

Nothing can take that away from the South Melbourne boys, not ever.

Two positives.

Even my cranky, vague newsagent, Mark, and his missus, Julie, were keeping up to speed on events in Brazil and both managed what might pass as modestly intelligent discourse on South Melbourne's grand adventure.

And they wouldn't know if a soccer ball was pumped up or stuffed. You play Sydney United or Gippsland and Joe Average yawns, scratches his bum and ambles off to the TAB.

Hit the paddock against Manchester United and people sit up and take notice.

However misplaced it might be, that sort of public credibility is invaluable.

And the mainstream publicity hasn't been half bad either.

More importantly, as an historical footnote going into the new millennium,

South Melbourne's wonderful effort in proudly representing our domestic competition in many ways validates all the spadework put in by so many people to actually get the NSL up and running some 24-years ago.

Those visionaries then at the helm of the half-dozen clubs which first set the wheels in motion for our NSL - Australia's first truly national sporting competition of any code of sport - back in 1976 would be rightfully very proud.

They've left an enduring legacy.

TV's most eloquent nude-nut actually looks like he's got a new lease of life at the Breakers.

But Andy Harper's task is being made a whole bunch easier given that he is playing in a very, very good team.

Sorry Lee, but we can't keep giving you ammunition to fire up the troops with any conviction after the club's new record eight-game undefeated streak was set in last Friday night's classic against Olympic.

And after losing Travis Dodd way before the curtain came down as well.

And you've got to like Olympic, win or lose.

They might not be as sexy as the Matildas - actually they're not even close - but Branko Culina's team approaches every game looking for a scoreboard win - and that's refreshing.

'The other team scores one, we'll score two' ethic mightn't always pay dividends, but Olympic empties the chamber before falling in the dust.

Olympic's crowds are up both home and away; testimony to their value for money.

I just hope for both club and coach it all doesn't come unstuck in the finals, as it did for Culina's 96/97 vintage Sydney United team, which took the regular season by storm in similar barnstorming fashion,

before getting their pants pulled down in front of 40,000 Bananabenders on grand final day.

Last Friday night's clash was a ripper; but just one of a succession of thrilling shoot-outs to date this season.

Even my usually understated C7 commentary colleague, Michael Cockerill, has been on life support in between shifts at NSL venues this season.

Fair dinkum, you just can't please some people.

Oh, the standard is crap, the crowds are down...blah, blah, blah.

Hello, reality on the line.

Newcastle is riding a tidal wave (Breakers, get it?), Wollongong has got a sniff, the Kingz are threatening, the Force have won a couple and Olympic are contending for the first time in five years.

You've got the champs over in Brazil, Brisbane still in the cauldron, Marconi and Carlton are on track to go back to the play-offs and the stench of death no longer hangs over North Sydney Oval.

Hell, this league is rocking and some of the match-ups going into the second half of the season will be monsters.

Ah, I love this game.

Newcastle's ten-man win over Olympic last Friday night continues the remarkable league trend this season of NSL teams apparently lifting above and beyond the call when down on numbers.

FIFA's propensity for eliminating just about all forms of physical contact from the game has had savage repercussions on the NSL this year, with some 49 players in for early scrubs thus far, up to and including the first four games of last week-end's round.

But surprisingly the on-field numerical disadvantage has not been near as debilitating as you might expect.

Teams playing with ten men or less are now 16-10-20 on the season and closing after recent weeks.

If somebody has a plausible theory as to why this is so, please drop us a line at 'Inside Soccer'.

Seriously.

The aforementioned red card stat, of course, leading us neatly into 'Hanging Judge' territory once again.

Hooray, by the way, for in round 14 there was a mere single red card for the weekend.

For the layman - that is, me - a far more palatable result and certainly a more accurate reflection of the disciplinary standards of our domestic competition.

After last Friday night's first four games of round 15 Matthew Breeze was back as outright leader in the race to find the NSL referee with the reddest right hand.

Young Master Dodd of the Breakers was Breeze's eighth victim of 1999/2000 when he was pinged against Olympic in the 3-2 slug-fest.

Managed to grab a quick yak with a couple of well-known NSL referees during the week just ended.

Whoops, I mean...well, I actually didn't talk to any such people.

What I mean to say is, if I did - which I didn't - the said match officials could be facing severe bum smackings from upstairs.

That's right, good folks, the NSL referees have been banned from talking to the media.

I know I'm labouring the point each week in this column, but isn't this just another retrograde step for the poor old refs, who are currently the most disenfranchised, misunderstood and abused members of our football community.

It's certainly a quantum step away from the days when top blokes and great whistlemen like Peter Rampley, John Santa-Isabel, John Fraser, Don Campbell and Chris Bambridge fraternised freely with everyone in the game and were welcomed most everywhere they went.

Currently the refs can't talk to the media, the coaches and clubs can't talk about the refs, the governing body is playing patch-up without addressing the serious on-going concerns of everyone and the perplexed NSL players - who also can't talk about the refs - are being drowned in a sea of red and yellow cards in unprecedented numbers.

As for that apparently prematurely announced mid-season round-table between coaches, clubs, Soccer Australia officials and some of the top refs, it is about as likely as going ahead soon as me getting a run for Chelsea next week-end.

Not one single NSL coach I've asked has heard a thing about it.

By the way, if I had been chatting to an NSL official - which I haven't - and he had mentioned that he felt that the refs were getting a tough go in this column, I just want to make it quite clear that 'Inside Soccer' does NOT have the refs in the cross-hairs.

It's merely that should we drop this increasingly divisive and damaging issue, who the hell is going to keep the pressuring the powers that be for a speedy resolution?

Heck, it's not even comfortable sitting on your hands.

Newcastle keeper Bobby Catlin will have to wait an extra week to get over the line, but the big ol' veteran will still get to pass a huge career milestone at his club's Breakers Stadium home on Friday week, when Newcastle hosts Adelaide Force.

The former Apia, Marconi and Olympic custodian would have played his 300th NSL game this weekend against currently jet-setting South Melbourne, but instead will become only the 29th player in NSL history to make the exclusive 300 club against Zoran Matic's outfit.

Without a game this weekend the extra time should ensure his club plans a big one to help Catlin celebrate the occasion.

Between the sticks for Marconi in four of that club's five grand finals between 1988 and 1996, the big bloke is still a dead-set champion as he plays a key role in Newcastle's audacious finals finals bid into the new millennium.

Top bloke, top effort.

With as much sincerity as you might credit me with, thanks to everyone who has picked up a copy of 'Inside Soccer' since the publication was revamped under new owner, John Vrtaric, and editor, Aidan Ormond.

According to figures from our distributors, 'IS' circulation was their biggest market improver over the last quarter of 1999, and by a fair old margin as well.

Go you good thing.

Truth is, I feel very fortunate to be involved, both with 'IS' and with soccer in Australia. Stick with us.

I'm off to cover the Olyroo series with C7 this week - I think it's around ten matches into that highly-improbable "50-game" Olyroo preparation for the 2000 Sydney Olympics coach Raul Blanco was promised a year or so back by Soccer Australia - and I'm looking forward to seeing how far the under-23's have come as the Olympiad looms ever closer.

And then the Matildas are playing the USA at Hindmarsh this Thursday.

I really am a lucky bastard.



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ARRARTE TIPS UPSET WIN FOR SYDNEY UNITED

By Aidan Ormond

The things footballers do to promote their clubs. Exciting Sydney United midfielder Nahuel Arrarte spent last Friday taking a soccer clinic at a youth detention centre in the lead-up to this weekend's match against Sydney Olympic. "It was pretty scary at the start and when I first heard I was doing it I was a bit concerned!" he said, "but once we broke the ice with the kids it was great," he said.

And he will be hoping his side can break their losing streak this weekend against Olympic.

It will be extra special for Arrarte; he will be up against his good friend Gabriel Chee Chee Mendez in the hot-house of a Sydney derby midfield, reviving memories of their time together in another soccer hotspot, Argentina.

"It's going to be a very tough game with players like Emerton and Tsekenis. But we can beat them. We'll go out and be confident," said Arrarte.

This view was endorsed by keeper Steve Tolios - a former Olympic keeper signed from the NSW Super League - who felt the side "could grind out a good result" against the league-leaders.

"I think the side does everything right," noted Arrarte, "but we just can't seem to put the goals away."

"I've been happy with my form and now that I've had the arthroscope on my

left knee it's better. At the start of the season I didn't expect to get so many games so it has been a bonus but there is always room of improvement.

"It's a side full of talented players but we just have to get it together. We owe it to our great fans to win."

Nahuel (pronounced Know-Elle) Arrarte was eight when he arrived in the west of Sydney from Argentina.

He played most of his junior football with Marconi before stints with NSWIS and Blacktown U/21s.

In 1997/98 he spent eight months at Boca Juniors youth team in Argentina.

It was the ultimate experience, especially as the club had on its books

at that time a certain Diego Armando Maradona.

"It was a dream I didn't want to wake up from," said Arrarte of the times he met Maradona.

"I got to shake his hand as well. His touches on the park were incredible even though he wasn't that fit... it was up there with the best experiences of my life. We had training games so being on the park with him was unbelievable. Claudio Caniggia was there too

"The training is more technical over there and it's daily. It's very different than here.

"At the start I went with Chee Chee Mendez. He is just so dedicated. We trained and acclimatized for two weeks

before we went to Boca for the trials. He gave me heaps of advice. I was there for eight months but I had contract problems so I returned to Sydney."

His return opened the door for the 19-year-old to play NSL, via the NSWIS, and he is genuinely enjoying the opportunity in his first of a two-season contract at Edensor Park.

"NSL is a great experience to play against stars like Slater, Trimboli etc.," said Arrarte.

"Dave Ratcliffe is a hard coach, he's a winner which I like and I am grateful that he has had faith in me."

Ratcliffe took his "no-names" squad, as he called them, for a pre-season tour of China last August.

It was there that Arrarte showed what he has to offer the club.

"The China tour was interesting. I've never played in front of 20,000 and to have scored the first goal of the year for Sydney United was excellent.

"It was a good way to break the ice with a new team. We seem to get along fine it's just hard to gel together with a brand new squad."

Ante Moric - a player who knows what it's like to have the tag of 'next big thing' on one's shoulders, was generous in his praise of Arrarte's quality.

"I think he seems determined, is naturally a right-footed player and he has that little bit of South American artistry. He is young and it seems to me that Nahuel has a good head on his shoulders.

"Maybe he can go further than just



Nahuel Arrarte: "It was a dream I did not want to wake up from," he said of the time he met Maradona at Boca Juniors.

NSL.

"My advice to him is to listen to the people who want to help you, like the coaches and families, and stay in contact with them and live a healthy life ... on the China tour he stood out straight away," explained Moric.

"Eventually it (the results) will come our way," said Arrarte of his side's current predicament.

There is no pressure on Sydney United and therein lies one of the points in their favour; Olympic would be expected to take all three points in this top v bottom clash.

And as we all know, there is nothing certain in football.

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ST. GEORGE: Alogdellis, Maglis (Toombs 90), Verrender, Kladis, Brennan, Watson, Bakis (Papageorgiou 80), Augerinos, Petratos, (Janic 82), Galea, Markopoulos.

BONNYRIGG: Bozic, Utjesenovic, Green, Crnokrak, Reid, Harding, Gunn (Candelon 76), Ghiso (Mancino 58), Hawrysiuk, Van Bentum, Cetinay (Leski 65).

Scorer: Bakis 64 (pen.), 77.

Yellows: Ghiso 45, Crnokrak 63, Reid 89 (Bonnyrigg), Verrender 90 (St. George).

Referee: Craig Pearce.

By Ben Cubby

St. George announced their return to the NSW Super League with a shock 2-0 victory over last season's minor premiers Bonnyrigg.

The result though came as no surprise to White Eagles coach John Turner.

"Bonnyrigg never win their first game of the year", he pointed out after the match, "and I've never got a point from St. George Stadium as a visiting coach".

Quicksilver striker Jimmy Bakis, one of six former Sydney Olympic players in the Saints line-up, did the damage with a pair of well-taken second-half goals.

A decent crowd rolled up to the ground on a cool, overcast Saturday afternoon and saw the home side on the defensive for much of the first half.

The new Bonnyrigg forward combination of Stewart Van Bentum and Aydin Cetinay looked threatening early on, especially when supported by highly-rated midfielder Michael Hawrysiuk.

Former Marconi Colt Lee Gunn shot narrowly wide of the St. George post in the eighth minute and Hawrysiuk drove the ball just over the bar in the ninth.

The Saints defence settled down after a few early flurries, though, and did well to thwart the fluent play of their opponents.

The accurate distribution of Mark Brennan provided Bakis with a couple of scoring chances in the first period, but

BAKIS DESTROYS BONNYRIGG AS SAINTS START WITH A BANG

White Eagles 'keeper Sacha Bozic proved equal to his long range efforts.

At the other end of the park, St. George debutante Stacey Alogdellis saved a low shot from Gunn, and then watched as Hawrysiuk hooked the ball high and wide from close range.

The home side emerged after the half-time break looking more penetrative up front and more organised at the back.

Bakis and Angelo Petratos pressured the Bonnyrigg backline into conceding a number of free kicks around the 18-yard box, but St. George's dead-ball man Simon Verrender was unable to nail the target.

The breakthrough came in the 64th minute, when the referee decided that Milan Crnokrak had knocked over Petratos in the box.

The St. George player made a meal of it, Crnokrak copped a yellow card and Bakis stepped up to make it 1-0 from the penalty spot.

The Saints players were still rejoicing when David Reid began a mazy run through their midfield. Stacey Alogdellis stayed awake, though, and advanced off his line quickly to turn away the shot.

Elias Augerinos, who had hitherto gone unnoticed, began to exert an influence on the match after the goal, and his

measured through-ball set up the clincher.

Petratos raced forward to meet the pass, but Bozic beat him by a whisker. The 'keeper fumbled under pressure, however, and Bakis arrived at a timely moment to smash it into the net.

The diminutive striker almost grabbed a hat-trick after the re-start, but this time Bozic brilliantly palmed the shot to safety.

The Saints worked hard for their win, growing stronger as the game progressed.

Michael Kladis stood out with a fine display at sweeper, and strikers Bakis and Petratos showed signs of a promising partnership.

"I'm happy", said St. George coach John Sentas. "We were a bit fresh, but we picked up in the second half."

"We'll have (Bill) Petrovski over next week and we're also awaiting Les Bihari's clearance."

"I miss this division. It's a very hard league", he said.

John Turner, Bonnyrigg's experienced coach, said it would be two or three weeks before the White Eagles are "together" as a team.

"We had five first team players missing, four of whom are stoppers. We've got a lot of young players this year - it'll take a

while to rebuild the side".

Meanwhile Peter Smith reports that Sutherland were always going to do it tough against one of the pre-season favourites Leichhardt Tigers

When ace marksman Steve Karavatakis needed only four minutes to open his season's account a whitewash was expected.

However just a minute later Matt Merralls replied with an athletic far post header and then Kris Karanasos scored after 25 minutes to give the Sharks a shock lead.

At that point the Tigers' Michael Galluzzo took the game by the scruff of the neck when he scored with a powerful header from the edge of the box on the half hour and then a stunning long range volley just a minute later.

At this point the course of the game changed along with the scoreline as Leichhardt took control.

Goals to Karavatakis and Yane Talcevski on 59 and 75 minutes effectively ending the contest. Sutherland youngster Kris Karanasos earned a second yellow card on 87 minutes while Tigers debutant Joe Bruni scored in the final minutes.

In a summary of Round One Super League 2000 games, five teams managed to come away with full points, and with crowds at some matches surpassing NSL averages, it was a good start for the biggest State-based competition in Australia.

Penrith Panthers and Macarthur Rams had a 1-1 struggle to mark Penrith's debut in Super League, but the third newcomer, Manly Warringah suffered a first-up home loss to Canterbury Marrickville, 1-3.

Eastern Suburbs took the lead in

the early stages of the second half of their game against premiers, Blacktown, at David Phillips Field, when former Demon Aaron Holst came on as a substitute and scored with his first touch. Blacktown equalised not long after through Damien Brown and the winner came well into stoppage time from Jason Bennett, who was put through by former Eastern Suburbs star Naoki Imaiya.

Fairfield found former Sydney Olympic keeper Gary Meier near impossible to pass against Central Coast at Nineveh Field, with Meier pulling off save

after save as they went to a surprise lead inside the first fifteen minutes through Paul Roberts. Fairfield equalised midway through the second half when a thunderbolt free kick from 35 yards by Sal Larocca almost took Meier with it into the back of the net, but further goals from Adam Peatey and 1999's Gold Medal winner, Peter Preston, saw Central Coast bounce back for a win that will have surprised many.

Bankstown and Parramatta Eagles had a tense 0-0 draw at Jensen Park.

SUPER LEAGUE TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
LEICHHARDT TIGERS	1	1	0	0	6	2	4	3
Can. Marrickville	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3
Cen. Coast Coasties	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3
St George Saints	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
Blacktown Demons	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
Penrith Panthers	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Macarthur Rams	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Parramatta Eagles	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bankstown City Lions	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Eastern Suburbs	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
Fairfield Bulls	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	0
Man. Warringah Dol.	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	0
Bonny. White Eagles	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
Sutherland Sharks	1	0	0	1	2	6	-4	0

RESULTS: ROUND 1

Fairfield Bulls 1-3 Central Coast
Sutherland Sharks 2-6 Leichhardt Tigers
St George 2-0 Bonnyrigg White Eagles
Penrith Panthers 1-1 Macarthur Rams
Manly Warringah 1-3 Canterbury Marrickville
Bankstown City 0-0 Parramatta Eagles
Eastern Suburbs 1-2 Blacktown City Demons



Super League

Saturday 15 January 2000

Kick-off times - 7.00pm (1st grade), 5.00pm (21s), 3.00pm (18s)

Blacktown City v. Bankstown City, Gabbie Stadium
Sutherland v. Fairfield, Seymour Shaw Park
Macarthur v. St George, Bensley Road Sports Complex
Bonnyrigg v Leichhardt, Serbian Centre

Sunday 16 January 2000

Kick-off times - 7.00pm (1st grade), 5.00pm (21s), 3.00pm (18s)

Canterbury Marrickville v Penrith, Henson Park
Parramatta Eagles v Manly Warringah, Melita Stadium
Eastern Suburbs v Central Coast, David Phillips Field

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SOUTH DOES AUSTRALIAN SOCCER PROUD



The impressive Jones and Liparoti police the ball out of play against Vasco.

By John Vrtaric
and Aidan Ormond

Like lambs to the slaughter went South Melbourne, the dual Australian champions, to the first ever

190,000 people crammed into it.

These days the capacity is far less but 60,000 to 70,000 make a great deal of noise in any Brazilian stadium.

And it was a cacophony of noise that greeted the Australian champions as they entered the Maracana against the home team, Vasco Da Gama.

But though they could not hear each other amidst the deafening decibels added to the occasion on a day that the South Melbourne players will never forget.

Coach Ange Postecoglou was disappointed about the negative response from most of the media prior to their departure and the first game was his chance to prove them wrong.

They came with a game plan, as underdogs there was only one choice, defend in numbers, but with intelligence. The plan worked for the first half and they did Australian football proud.

They were prised open by a beauty, a 30-metre dipping, swerving shot from Felipe that would have beaten even Bosnich.

South, however, even managed some show pieces themselves - a 30 metre shot from David Clarkson, a looping header from Curcija and a header from Steve Panopoulos that would have been the equaliser had it gone in.

Postecoglou, rightfully, was proud of

"It was intimidating at first but the players blocked it out and it was certainly a magic moment that the players will never forget.

"In the end the differences between the teams was a world class goal scored from 30 metres out ... we competed against the humid weather and they had the vocal home crowd.

"I was happy with the way Robbie Liparoti played in the back and Michael Curcija up front worked hard but it was a good team effort"

Of course those cynics will say that Manchester United - who can't make the final - will hope to lose so they can slink out of Brazil (there is a three versus four playoff later in the week) and get back to the 'real' action of the English Premier.

To a degree this is understandable, and one can sympathise with their predicament of being one of the world's truly 'global' teams.

Having said that the notorious English tabloids would have field day if 'a bunch of part-timers' as South was once described, could get a result against an out of sorts Man Utd.

Should Postecoglou opt for that five-man defence that worked so well against Vasco - particularly if Liparoti is over his



Blatsis deals with Romario of Vasco.

stomach bug - then anything is possible.

As Postecoglou said yesterday, 'Man Utd is the best club side ... but we're confident.'

But whatever happens, South will come home with their heads held high.

They have given our league international credibility, and for that we should all be grateful.

*Pics on this page and front courtesy of Peter Kartsidimas, Reuters and the South Melbourne net site at www.southmelbournesc.com.au



Dreaming of Rio: South players get some shut eye before arriving in Brazil.

World Club Championship played in the greatest football nation in the world, Brazil.

Having won the right to represent the Oceania Confederation in the footballing backwaters of Fiji, South Melbourne found themselves facing the aristocrats of Manchester United and Vasco Da Gama.

The like of Fausto de Amicis, Robert Liparoti, Nick Orlic, Michael Curcija in head-to-head contests against famed Brazilian internationals Romario, Edmundo, Jorginho, Junior Baiano and rising stars like Felipe.

And that was only the entrée, awaiting the pioneers from Australia tomorrow morning (Australian time) are the illustrious names of Ryan Giggs, Jaap Stam, David Beckham et al.

Just to make them feel a little less daunted the familiar figure of fellow Australian Mark Bosnich will be lining up in the United goal.

To top it all off South Melbourne received a 'favourable' draw with their games being played in the famed Maracana stadium, where once more than

his charges who, he thought, "stuck to the game plan and put in 100 per cent."

"Obviously while we were disappointed that we didn't get the result that



South's efficient defence clears another attack.

we wanted, I couldn't be disappointed with the players.

"The atmosphere was unbelievable. The amount of noise was outstanding as soon as we walked out onto the field.

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AUSSIES on the world stage

A round-up of how our Aussies players fared abroad this last week ...



Stan Lazaridis ... returned from injury.

In a week where many of the Aussies Abroad are Aussies at Home with most of the overseas Olyroos having returned for the four nation tournament in Adelaide, except for Harry Kewell, of course.

Players missing from club duties include the likes of Marco Bresciano and Vince Grella, who have already missed two games for their Serie B team Empoli, Daniel Allsop, who missed the glamor FA Cup tie for his club Manchester City against Leeds United and Nick Rizzo, who will miss Crystal Palace's games in the next week.

In the post New Year games in the UK, played early last week, Kewell played for Leeds United in a 1-2 home loss to Aston Villa.

Kewell did, though, score a scorcher of a goal for the home team. Picking the ball up a long way away from the Villa goal, in the first minute of the second half, he let fly with a tremendous 30 metre pile driver that thundered into the back of the goal. Other than scoring the equalising goal Kewell had one of his quieter games.

HARRY BACK IN THE GOALS BUT MUSCAT SENT-OFF

In other Premier League games Richard Johnson played a full game for Watford as they lost again away to Derby County by 2-0. After a one game resurgence Watford's loss puts further pressure on them as they drop deeper into the relegation mire.

In the Nationwide Division One games Wolverhampton Wanderers' Kevin Muscat (below) received another red card as his team drew 1-1 with Blackburn. On this occasion it wasn't one of Muscat's thunderous tackles that did the damage but a handled goal line clearance of a Matt Jansen shot that brought out the red card for the Aussie defender.

In other Nationwide Division One games Jason Kearton was in goals as the improving Crewe Alexandra drew 1-1 at home to leaders Manchester City. For the

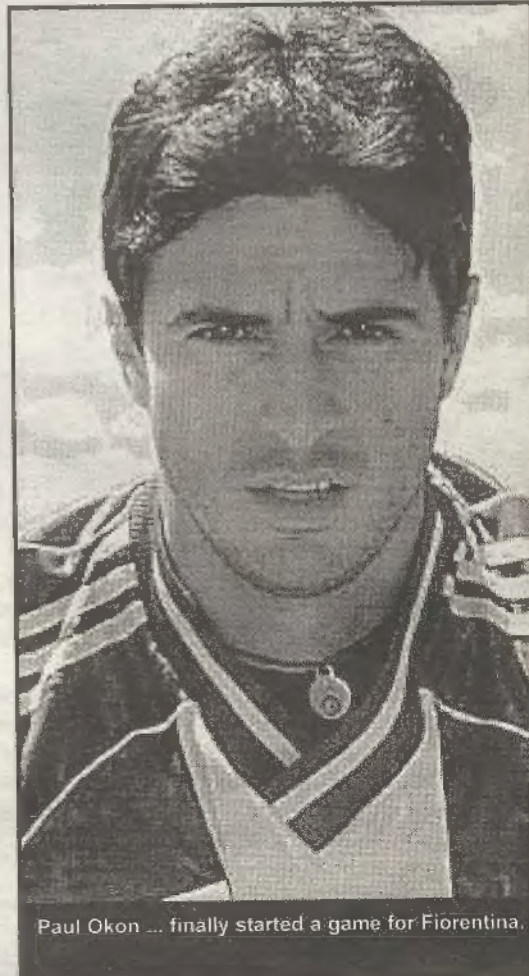
visitors Danny Tiatto came on in the 49th minute and received a yellow card in the 87th minute.

In a 2-2 draw between Grimsby Town and Sheffield United Shaun Murphy played the whole game and was booked in the 69th minute as his team continued its resurgence as they attempt to pry themselves away from the relegation zone.

Both Aussies Craig Foster and Nick Rizzo were missing from the Crystal Palace team that won 1-2 away to Stockport County. Rizzo was on his way back to Australia for the Olyroo series while Foster is injured again.

West Bromwich Albion's Aussie pair of Jason Van Blerk and Andrew McDermott seem to take it in turn to play in the first team and it was the latter that took the field as his struggling team lost 0-2 at home to Barnsley.

In the Nationwide Division Two games Millwall drew 2-2 at Bury with Tim Cahill, desperately trying to become an Olyroo, playing a full game but Lucas Neill did not take the field and eventually, after a 'Harry Kewell-like' standoff, boarded a plane to Adelaide for the Olyroo games.



Paul Okon ... finally started a game for Fiorentina.

The weekend saw most of the Premier League and Nationwide Division One teams resting from their usual League games to participate in the fourth round FA Cup games.

In the 1-0 defeat of Queens Park Rangers by fellow Division One team Charlton, Aussie George Kulscar was included in the QPR squad but did not see any action.

John Aloisi remains in limbo as his injury condition becomes almost chronic as he watched his team Coventry beat Burnley at home by three goals to nil.

Everton had a similarly easy 2-0 home win over another Division One team Birmingham, for whom Stan Lazaridis made a welcome return from injury as a 62nd minute substitute.

Ever present Shaun Murphy was absent from the Sheffield United team as his team went down 4-1 away to Newcastle. Murphy's booking in the league game earlier in the week brought him over the disciplinary points maximum which forced him out of this game.

In the 1-1 draw between Premier League strugglers Sheffield Wednesday and Division One mid-table perched Wolverhampton Wanderers, Kevin Muscat played the full game while Steve Corica remained on the bench.

In the glamour game of the fourth round Harry Kewell played a full game while Danny Tiatto sat on the bench as over 29,000 witnessed Leeds United win 5-2 away to Manchester City.

Kewell was clearly the man of match with two goals and came close to scoring his hat-trick towards the end but his shot hit the post. He played as a striker in this game, replacing Leeds' leading scorer

Michael Bridges as partner to Alan Smith.

One absentee from the FA Cup competition was Manchester United who chose to take part in a different cup competition on the other side of the world.

In their World Club Championship draw with Necaxa and the loss to Vasco Da Gama Mark Bosnich was in goals for both games and was not at fault for any of the four goals conceded thus far by the European champions.

There was some good news for an Australian in one of the few European countries not taking a winter break.

Paul Okon who has been out of the Serie A Fiorentina side for a most of the season finally made his return as a starter in the star-studded team as they drew 0-0 away to Lecce last Thursday.

Okon was adjudged to be one his team's best players by many of the media outlets focusing on the Serie A. Okon himself, usually a very reserved character, was ecstatic with his display but did not get his anticipated reward with a starting role on Sunday in the big game against Inter Milan.

Fiorentina had a superb 2-1 home victory over the Italian giants but Okon stayed on the bench for the duration of the game.

Australian born Ante Seric, who has chosen to represent Croatia instead of the country of his birth, made a return to the Verona squad after an absence of a number of weeks.

His team went down by 1-0 away to second placed Juventus but Seric remained on the bench as he did for the weekend 1-1 draw with Reggina.

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Rizzo flies high over Nigerian Eagles

MATCH STATS:

AUSTRALIA 1(Allsopp 41)
NIGERIA 0

AUSTRALIA:

J Didulica, M Bresciano, T Baser, C Coyne, H Foxe, S Laybutt, B Emerton (capt), K Wehrman (M Sterjovski 90'), D Allsopp, J Culina (V Grella 80'), N Rizzo (J Burns 66')

NIGERIA:

I Dooyin, A Okechukwu, T Oyashipe, S Johnson, S Ibeji (O Okoye 60'), R Salaudeen (E Issah), R Akaruye (C Odiah 87'), D Aiyenugba, P Obafuoso, D Okougo, H Omokoh,

Yellow Cards:

Australia: Bresciano 29 Rizzo 51

Nigeria: Oyashipe 57

Red Cards

Nil

BEST PLAYERS:

3. Rizzo

2. Foxe

1. Culina

Referee:Gerry Connolly

KOREA 2 (K H Seol 68' K W Lee 88')
EGYPT 0

KOREA:

Y D Kim, Ji S Park, J H Park, Jin S Park, D K Kim, K H Seol (H K Na 83'), Y P Lee (S W Jang 86'), Y W Ha (S K Cho 69'), H Y An (K W Lee 31'), D H Park, D G Lee (C W Choi 66')

EGYPT:

M Monsef, R Said, A Abdel Zaher, A Ramadan, M Sedek, S Abdel Aziz, T El Sayed, M Homms, Y Hamdi, M Treka, A Belal

Yellow Cards:

14' Y W Ha (Korea), 43' S Abdel Aziz (Egypt), 78' M Sedek (Egypt)

Red Cards:

83' A Ramadan (Egypt)

By Sue Howlett and Donald Campbell

In the second match of the double header Australia showed great form to defeat reigning Olympic champions Nigeria. Both teams were below full strength with Australia missing its best player Harry Kewell while Nigeria left five of its best players at home to prepare for the African Champions with the senior national team.

It was an opportunity for the Adelaide crowd to see the many of the Olyroos who have ventured overseas but a disappointing crowd of just under 6,000 turned out.

Australia started the game well and gradually gained the ascendancy during

the first half, although the visitors became more dangerous as their cohesion improved. The game was played at a fast pace with the quicksilver Nigerians causing the Australian defence plenty of trouble with their speedy counter attacks.

Nigeria was very strong down the left wing through the speedy Philip Obafuoso who gave Australia's right defensive back Marco Bresciano plenty of bother.

The agile Nigerian goalkeeper kept them in the game early in the first half with some unorthodox saves. The best save was when he raced out of his goal to the edge of the penalty box to smother the ball just as Nick Rizzo was about to shoot after a great through ball from Kasey Wehrman.

The main battle took place in midfield where Jason Culina was providing accurate passes through to his offensive players Rizzo, Daniel Allsopp and captain Brett Emerton.

Nigeria were physically imposing and very quick when they had possession but the Australian team did not allow them time on the ball.

The best chance for the Nigerian team came from a corner in the 37th minute when Sunday Ibeji passed to Taofeek Oyashipe who smashed a screamer over the bar from a 45 degree angle.

The only goal of the game came in the 41st minute when Wehrman received the ball from a corner clearance and chipped the ball to Hayden Foxe - who was kept onside by slowly reacting defender who did not move forward with the rest of his defence. Foxe half volleyed the ball into the path of Daniel Allsopp who headed the ball into an empty net.

Seconds later a further goal by the Olyroos was disallowed for an infringement in the penalty area. A Bresciano cross from the right beat the Nigerian 'keeper and reached Allsopp but he handled the ball as he attempted to control it.

The second half began with a series of attacks by Nigeria but it was Nick Rizzo who had the best chance early on when a quick counter attack delivered the ball to him just outside the Nigerian penalty box. Instead of squaring the ball the waiting Allsopp and Emerton he decided to take on a defender.

He pushed the ball past him into the box but realising that the ball would run over the goal line he decided that a dive for a penalty was the preferable alternative. He was promptly booked

Players and spectators were then assaulted by the noise of a (luckily, false) fire alarm bell which sounded for nearly ten minutes. The loudest cheers of the evening came when the alarm was finally turned off.

Nigeria's Ugochukwu Okoye made a good solo effort in the 66th minute to shoot from 25m out past the goalkeeper's left hand post and put the Australian team on notice that the game was far from over.

They answered with a good fast break by Bresciano who had a much better game when moved into left wing role vacated by the substituted Rizzo. His cross was deflected and that allowed the defence to clear it.

Moments later a great move delivered a pass to Culina who was brought down in the box, but what looked like a legitimate claim for a penalty was turned down by referee Gerry Connolly.

Australia continued to attack with a great shot coming in the closing stages of the match from Brett Emerton which sailed just over the bar.

Australia just deserved to win with more chances overall in a generally even match. The team was thwarted by some outstanding saves by the Nigerian goalkeeper who played a vital role for his team.

Best for Australia was Rizzo, who tormented the opposition with his mazy runs on the left; Wehrman who had a great second half; Foxe (left) who was strong at the back as well as making effective runs through the middle and Culina who was very busy in the middle of the park.

In the early game of the double header Korea dominated possession in the first half but could not turn it into goals. They were quicker than the Egyptians and were first to the ball on most occasions while dominant in the air.

The Egyptian players were more physical in their approach to play. Most Egyptian attacks came on the break and shots were generally from long range.

The Egyptian goalkeeper was called upon to make good saves on a couple of



The Eagle from Crystal Palace, Nick Rizzo, mesmerized the Eagles from Nigeria.

occasions. The best opportunity came in the 40th minute, when a cross by Lee Kwan Woo went straight to Seol Ki Hyeon whose header bounced back to Park Jin Sub who forced a second shot that was saved by the Egyptian goalkeeper, Amir Abdel Hamid.

In the second half, Korea was in total control. The first goal was scored in the 67th minute by Seol Ki Hyeon who powerfully drove a 30 metre shot straight into the net.

Egypt defended for successfully for most of the second half but lost their shape after the send off of Ibrahim Abdel Gawad in the 81st minute for a crude tackle on Lee Young Pyo.

In the 89th minute Korea moved forward through striker Na Hee Keun who kept his cool and took advantage of the hesitation from Egypt who were anticipating an offside call.

The flag stayed down and he passed to Lee Kwan Woo who clinically finished off the move.



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Stuart Young: his move to Wolves from Singapore has been a real success.

By Aidan Ormond

In the twelve games since he arrived from Singapore, Wolves' 26-year-old English striker has - as was predicted by *Inside Soccer* - added a new dimension to the Wolves attack by, in his words, "doing the simple things to bring others into the game." And at the other end of the park the shrewd signing of David Cervinski has steered a defence in dire need of some hard-edged Aussie NSL experience. Little wonder Wollongong is sitting comfortably in the six and a genuine chance of staying there come the business end of the campaign.

Wolves skipper Matt Horsley emphasized the point, saying that Young had filled the role that Tony Perinich had two seasons ago.

"Stuart is an integral part of our success this year. He is very strong on the ball, has good vision and holds up the ball well ... a valuable acquisition together with Cervinski," observed Horsley.

"I've really enjoyed it. The football has been good, the stadiums I have seen have been of a high standard and I am very happy," said Young prior to the round 14 4-3 home win over Parra Power (a match he was suspended for, but more about that later.)

(Wellington Woodlands).

"The game is quite physical here, but I have been brought up in England so that is part of my natural game and I have no problems with it."

Added to his fitting in to NSL football like a glove is the fact that Young has settled into the south coast quite easily. He and his wife live five minutes from the beach at picturesque Corrimal, the club is, in his words "so friendly, everyone helps each other" and he has friend and teammate Cervinski to guide him (the two were S-league stars last season.)

"The way of life is so relaxed and

"I haven't been suspended for five years playing in Singapore and England. I have been here for eleven games and I am suspended already (for the Power game), and I am not a dirty player by any stretch.

Stuart Young on refereeing in the NSL

easy here on the south coast, and I feel if you are happy with your life it helps with your football," added Young.

"Dave Cervinski's experience has helped everybody. Wolves are not exactly over-achievers according to the stats I looked at, so to acquire David who, at 29,

Aidan Ormond chats with Wolves' new English striker Stuart Young

Doing the easy things well

"I should have scored more than the five I have actually ... an inch here and there could have made all the difference, it's the only part of my game I am unhappy about," he noted with a genuine hint of disappointment.

"The quality of the fields here make it better for football as compared to say Singapore where I was before I came here

is at the peak of his career is a stroke of genius on the part of the club.

"Dave has helped me along in every aspect of Australian life. Our respective families get along well and really ... he has helped my wife and I here in Australia enormously."

And the upcoming visit to Perth is an away trip, like many, Young will relish.

"I've heard it is a great atmosphere. 'Pom City' I think they call it? From what everyone has told me and what I have seen on TV, the club is one that the rest of the Australian league should and could aspire to. It's overall the best club in Australia I'm told."

During the course of this season this paper has tried to view the performances of NSL referees as objectively as possible. Yes we have been critical but we feel there is a problem.

Young's experiences in the short time he has been here validates what many, including IS, are saying.

"I haven't been suspended for five years playing in Singapore and England. I have been here for eleven games and I am suspended already (for the Power game), and I am not a dirty player by any stretch.

"In general - and there have been one or two good ones - the referees are not approachable, and have been a little temperamental," he said choosing his words carefully.

"I think it's important to have a rapport with players and I don't mean to sound over-critical but I believe the standard could be much better.

"We are grown men, sure there is the odd bit of petulance ... but referees are not school teachers. A good referee is someone you don't remember.

"It's a real shame that a game can be turned not by good play but by decisions from the referee. For instance, the decision to red-card young Paul Reid in Brisbane for a couple of nothing tackles, while some of our guys got pole-axed (even opposition coach John Kosmina late agreed it was a needless red card.) This is just one example of a number of questionable refereeing decisions that we feel we have been hard done-by.

"It's frustrating."

Back to playing matters and Young had a chance to view Australia's WCC 2000 side South Melbourne in their last home game during a 1-1 draw with Wolves before Christmas; he is confident that the Blues will acquit themselves well in Brazil.

"There is no reason why they can't get a couple of good results. They like to pass the ball around the back to create openings, which is the way a lot of sides around the world play.

"To be given the chance to play sides like they are can only mean good things for Australian soccer. You can't judge where you until you play against the best."

Speaking of the best, Young watched the recent tour of Brazil to play the Socceroos, but it was fellow striker Mark



Stuart Young: "Viduka is a world class talent and Australia should use him more in its marketing of the game to kids here."

Viduka who stole the show according to him.

"Australia acquitted themselves wonderfully well in the second game. With the introduction of Viduka - a genuinely world class striker - Australia looked a quality side. The first game's conditions probably suited the Brazilians more, and it showed."

"Viduka has everything - he's big strong and has two good feet. He is a genuine world talent and he is the kind of guy that should be marketed more in this country because he is the one who can get kids excited about playing soccer."

And it's at Wollongong that they are also getting fans excited about their play this year, reviving memories of two years ago when they dumped Adelaide City out of the finals, but succumbed to Marconi at Parra Stadium despite a thunderous effort from Alvin Ceccoli in front of 4,000 travelling fans.

"We are all positive thinking. I am not as quick as Esala Masi and Sas Petrovski, yet hopefully it has

been beneficial having me at the club because I like to hold the ball up and bring other players into the game, like Chipperfield who can make those runs from deep.

"The quicker players at Wolves make me look good," he joked.

"It's basic football ... it's easy and looks good and is pleasing to the eye you use each other and it's effective."

"I fully believe we will be in the six. We have taken four points from the champions, took a point from Strikers and Olympic away, plus four points away in Auckland," concluded Young.

A good example of this was Wolves' first goal away to Kingz in round seven. The ball was played into Young inside the box. Instead of turning his man he used his bulk to hold up the ball until a better option arrived - it did when Matt Horsley supported him, received the lay-off and knocked in a first time curling ball that was met perfectly by Masi's head to score.

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Ann Marie Vozzo sweeps up women's awards

15-year-old South Australian defender wins both Julie Dolan Medal and Best First Year Player

By Aidan Ormond

Young South Australian defender Ann Marie Vozzo was the big winner at the annual Australian Women's Soccer Awards announced last Friday.

The talented 15-year-old - from the SASI Pirates - won the major trophy of the day, the Julie Dolan Award for the best player in the Ansett Summer Series (Women's NSL) as well as being awarded the Best First Year Player.

Previous winners of the Julie Dolan medal were strikers Sharon Black in 1997 and Julie Murray, in 1998, both important members of the current Matildas squad.

Vozzo was speechless when speaking to Inside Soccer later:

"No way in the world I expected this. Kevin (SASI coach Kevin McCormack) is playing me sweeper and I am very happy in this position.

"I try not to set long-term goals I prefer to set little goals, such as to have a successful state U/17 championships in South Australia.

"I would never have expected what

has happened to me in this last six months," said the teenage High School student.

SASI Pirates coach Kevin McCormack believed that his defender has great organizational qualities.

"She has been very very consistent, she knows what she wants and has been an important part of a defence that has conceded the least goals of any side.

"She reads the game well and gets into good positions and is strong on the ball."

Queensland's Belinda Dawney (above) won the award for the highest scorer of the league playing for QAS Sting.



Matildas that's for sure, it's my long-term goal and I plan on making it come true.

"I only started to play last year with the QAS. I hope I can make the AIS training squad this year."

The international player of the year award went to the recently retired Traci Bartlett.

In an emotional speech she thanked her teammates and Matildas coach Chris Tanzey for "making me the player I was."

Bartlett and another guest, the also retired Kim Revell, said they both were planning on moving to Queensland but hoped to stay involved in the game in some capacity.

Julie Dolan herself was also honoured for being Oceania's Women's Player of the Century, an award that was bestowed on her by FIFA in Germany a few days earlier.

Dolan, who lives and works in Japan, was humble when announced as the award winner.

"I'm flabbergasted and it's quite unbelievable. The only time I knew about it was just prior to the start of this ceremony. I didn't even know they were having this award but I am extremely honoured," said Dolan.

AWSA sponsors Ansett and Mitre were also present at the awards held a few hours prior to the Matildas versus Sweden Australia Cup encounter.

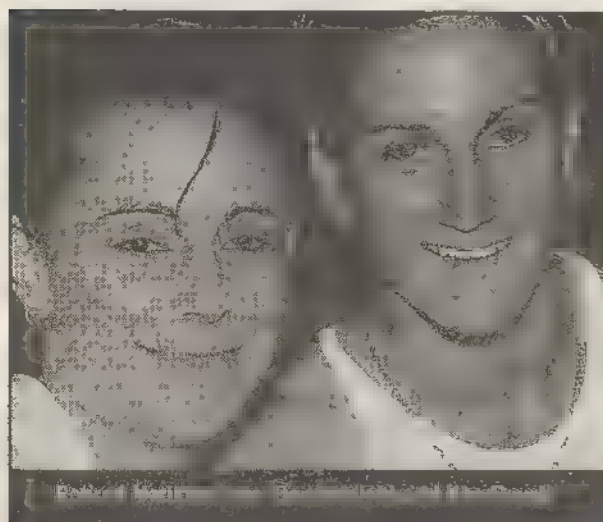
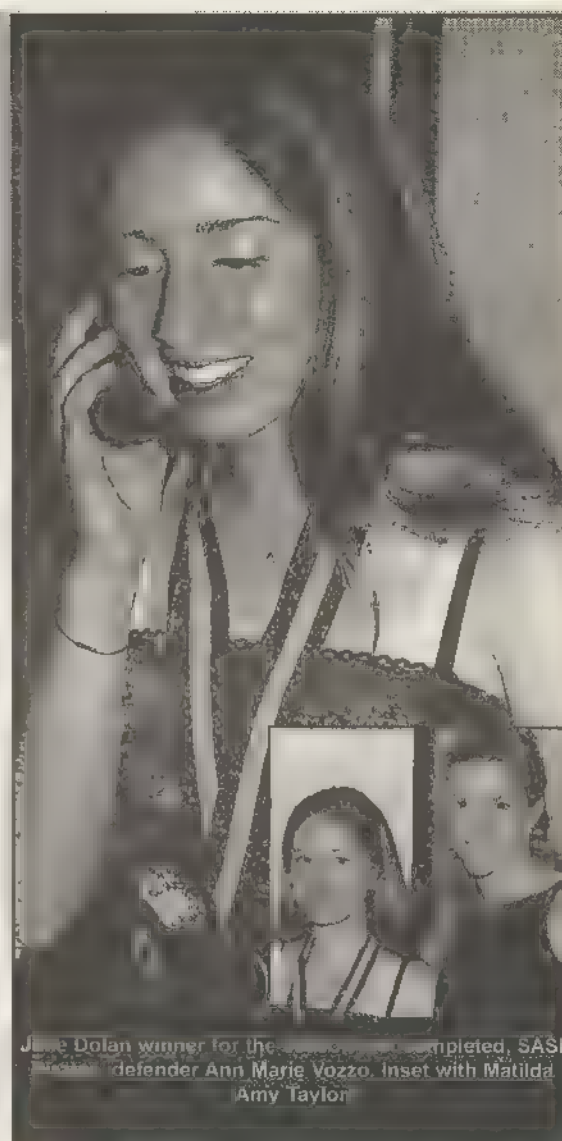
CEO of the AWSA Warren Fisher was impressed with the youthfulness of the winners, which he said, "augured well

for the future of women's soccer in Australia."

It would be hard to disagree with him. With this sort of talent our future in the first few years of this new century appears bright.

On the same day the state associations were meeting to, in the words of AWSA President Shirley Brown "decide how the game will be run in this country."

*All photography by Joe Palos



Cooper's Toys R-us Victory Tour

Only in America could you have such a tour name! Sarah Cooper was one of two Matildas recently invited to the US-based indoor six-a-side exhibition series called the Toys R-Us Victory Tour. It was 12 games played in 12 American cities with interchange rules.

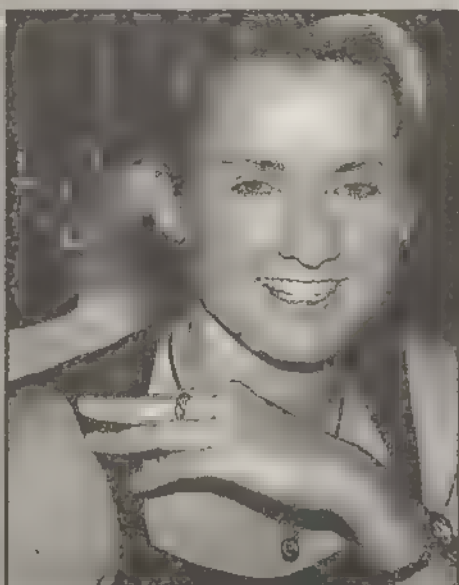
"It was designed to keep the hype up after the World Cup," said Cooper (right).

"They are also testing the waters for a league that would feature international players and Americans because there really isn't a bridge for their players to the national team.

"They desperately need a league for their national team players because once they finish college they really don't have anything but their national team program," she said.

Cooper - a qualified teacher - is hopeful of gaining entry into their coaching system in the various camps at some time in the future.

With the financial benefits of a US pro league it is inevitable that more Aussies will be looking to work in the lucrative American soccer scene.



"I think both Julie Murray and I performed quite well so probably more Aussies will be invited back in the future."

There are plans for another 'Victory' tour later this year. The financial incentives no doubt tempting to our Matildas who have survived on very little over their careers.

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Experience in coaching at the elite level is desirable.

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PO Box 6024 Blacktown Business Centre 2148

Matildas stumble in first Australia Cup clash

"We lacked commitment," says new coach Tanzey

By Paul Goodwin at North Sydney Oval

On a squally, chilly evening a good crowd was on hand at North Sydney Oval to see the first of the games in the second Australia Cup series.

While another game was being played in Melbourne between USA and the Czech Republic traditional rivals the Matildas and Sweden put on a good show for the assembled masses at the pictur-

esque Sydney arena.

It was clear quite early in the game that Sweden had the composure and authority to make life very hard for the Australians, ranked 11th in the world to their own 7th, and so it proved with the Swedes running out 2-0 winners on the night.

Sweden defended superbly, with keeper Ulrika Karlsson a commanding presence in her own goalmouth.

It was not long before the Swedes got on top and began to pepper the Australian goal, earning a number of fouls as they proved very dangerous going forward and in so doing invited some reckless tackles on approach to the Matildas' goal.

Confusion reigned in the Australian defence when Hanna Ljungberg lobbed a ball towards goal in the 15th minute with both keeper Tracey Wheeler and Cheryl Salisbury going for the same ball.

With the high bounce, so common at North Sydney Oval, it landed in the net for a 1-0 lead to the Scandinavian visitors.

Ljungberg had snuck in when a ball had not been cleared far enough out of defence and used her predatory instincts to perfection.

The Matildas gamely fought back and mounted a number of good attacks, win-

ning some free kicks of their own around the edge of the Sweden penalty area.

Sharon Black fired in a shot after one such infringement in the 17th and it needed some smart thinking by Karlsson by punching clear to avert the threat of an early equaliser.

Julie Murray, who toiled away up front without reward all night, Katrina Boyd and at least one more Matildas' player all arrived a split second too late to turn in another well fought free kick from Black in the 23rd.

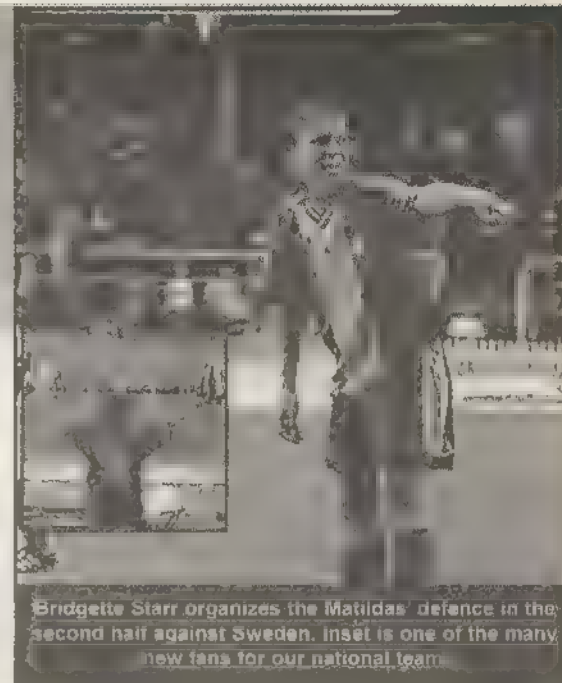
Sweden went two goals up in the 27th when from Malin Andersson's corner on the left, directed to the near post, a prod by striker Cecilia Sandell pushed the ball over the line before Dianne Alagich could react first, as she stood on guard.

Australia played well enough in the second half to contain the Swedish side, but without really offering much of a threat themselves.

Murray and Boyd again were unable to get there in time to turn in a cross from deep on the right by Black five minutes after the restart and two minutes from time Amy Wilson pushed the ball just wide of the post after a promising move by Australia.

The game saw the home debut of 17-year-old Heather Garriock, the youngest Matilda, with a number of others being given their chance in the second period.

Sunni Hughes was brought on to boost the attack, but it was really left to Julie Murray to carry most of the load and



Bridgette Starr organizes the Matildas' defence in the second half against Sweden. Inset is one of the many new fans for our national team.

she did a good job for her country.

Overall while Australia was not disgraced they did play well below their potential, a fact that their coach Chris Tanzey admitted after the match, when he said "there was only one side in it in the first half ... we lacked commitment and we certainly did not train the way we have to play this way. Having said that, I bet we got more out of this game than the Americans did tonight."

AUSTRALIA: Wheeler, Starr, Alagich, Forman (C), Salisbury, Murray, Black (Garnock 68), Duus (Small 46), Boyd (Hughes 63), Wainwright (Golebiowski 79), Wilson.

SWEDEN: Karlsson, Westberg, Tornqvist (Sundh 79), Lonnqvist (Green 83), Bengtsson (Svensson 51), Mostrom (Gustafsson 71), Sandell, Andersson, Ljungberg (Flyborg 87), Marklund, Fagerstrom.

Goalscorers

Sweden: Hanna Ljungberg 15, Cecilia Sandell 27.

Referee: Sheena Storrie



A dejected Aussie captain Alison Forman after the game at North Sydney. All pics in Sydney by Joe Palos.

And this was just the 'B' team!

By Jeremy Ruane at Olympic Park in Melbourne

They may not have any of their Women's World Cup-winning combination on hand in their bid to win the 2000 Australia Cup, but the USA were still able to field a formidable combination in their opening match in the Australia Cup competition, when they took on the Czech Republic at Melbourne's Olympic Park on January 7.

Youngsters many of them were, but they made light work of their European opposition in recording an emphatic 8-1 victory in front of a crowd which grew to 3,034 by the game's conclusion.

After a couple of early 'sighters' striker Mandy Clemens was twice denied by Czech goalkeeper Zuzana Pincova in the tenth and eleventh minutes, but it took just sixty more seconds before the USA were on the board.

Susan Bush saw her shot headed off the line by Marie Tlachova, with the resulting clearance being directed to Shermi Kester. Her cross picked out Jenny Streiffer, who thumped home the opening goal.

Five minutes later, the USA stretched their advantage. Clemens the architect with a fine run down the right before pulling the ball back to allow Bush to pick her spot.

After Pincova had saved a powerful Streiffer header, the goalkeeper covered herself in ignominy in the 59th minute conceding one of the softest goals you'll ever see.

Nikki Serienaga - one of many to impress in this USA line-up - struck a twenty-yard shot which Pincova appeared to have covered, but inexplicably allowed to bounce over her diving form and into the bottom corner of the net.

At this Czech heads visibly dropped, and the more athletic USA side, many of whom came to this tournament fresh from college soccer, proceeded to run riot in the second spell.

Just five minutes into it, the new-look World and Olympic champions punished another Pincova blunder. Kester slung home a low cross from Christie Welsh, a half-time substitute who, on debut, played with all the panache of a veteran.

The USA went nap after 57 minutes Danielle Slaton's blindside run proving the

perfect outlet to cap off a Serienaga-inspired raid. Slaton puled the ball back for Welsh, whose shot was blocked on the line by Tachova, the one Czech defender who never gave up the cause.

Kester latched onto the rebound - 5-0.

Captain Michele French inspired the USA's sixth goal her deep 65th minute cross picking out Nandi Pryce on the far post. She headed the ball across for Streiffer, who joined Kester in bagging a brace of goals. Welsh scored a richly deserved goal in the 74th minute, beating Pincova all ends up with an absolute beauty from the edge of the area after a Kester-led raid.

Pincova's misery was not yet complete for after saving at the feet of both Streiffer and Kester, she was rendered helpless by Welsh in the 83rd minute. The keeper did well to parry the striker's rasping drive, but was powerless to prevent Veronica Zepeda from lashing home the USA's eighth goal of the game.



USA's Danielle Slaton (white shirt) zips past Dudova of Czech in the 6-1 demolition.

It wasn't the final one, however, that honour belonging to Czech striker Iveta Dudova, who capitalised on an outnumbered US defence to score her country's lone goal in some style, lifting the ball over the advancing

Lakes a Beene to bring about the final 8-1 scoreline.

The USA were well-served by many, with Serienaga, Clemens, Welsh, Streiffer, Kester, Beene - when called upon, and midfield general Aisha Cramer all impressing in this match.

USA: Beene, Bryan (Pryce 46), Lindsey, French, Streiffer, Serienaga, Cramer (Wagner, 46), Slaton (Adams, 60), Clemens (Welsh, 46), Bush (Zepeda, 60), Kester.

Czech R: Pincova, Cervenkova (booked, 25), Hrenova, 31), Zahonkova, Knavova, Tlachova (Valcova, 80), Mackova (Petranova, 73), Jerabkova (Kaplanova, 13), Jedlickova (Duskova, 55), Scasna, Chlumecka (booked, 89), Dudova.

Referee: Krystina Sol

Scoring: USA: J. Streiffer (12, 65), S. Bush (17), N. Serienaga (39), S. Kester (50, 57), C. Welsh (74), V. Zepeda (83). **Czech Republic:** I. Dudova (85).

Best Players: N. Serienaga (USA) 3; J. Streiffer (USA) 2; S. Kester (USA) 1.

With the Olympics just nine months away Soccer Australia caught up with Olyroo

Daniel Allsopp



FULL NAME: DANIEL LEE ALLSOPP
CLUB: Manchester City
Date Of Birth: 10th August 1978
Left or right footed? Right
Eye Colour: Green
Height: 186cm
Weight: 86kg
Positions Played: Striker

THE STATS & FACTS ...

Full Olyroo Appearances: 4
 Olyroo Goals (Vs Country): 1
 National Representative Honours (other): U-17s, U-20s
 Number of Seasons with current Club: 1
 Clubs Played For: Port Melb, Carlton, South Melb, Monbulk, Croydon, Knox City

Junior Clubs:

Age I started playing soccer: 5

PERSONALITY INSIGHT ...

Favourite Band: Pearl Jam
List 3 CDs you couldn't live without: Pearl Jam - "Ten", Pearl Jam - "Vitalogy", Pearl Jam - "Versus"

If you could be a character from any movie, who would it be?:

Favourite Comedian:

Last Book read:

Best ever concert:

Favourite Food:

Favourite Drink:

Favourite TV Show

Mel Gibson "Braveheart"
Jerry Seinfeld
Hannibal
Pearl Jam, Melbourne Park in 1998
Chinese
Bud Seinfeld

THE PEERS ...

Favourite Overseas Player: Ronaldo
Favourite Overseas Team: Man City
Most Admired Australian (based locally): Paul Trimboli

Most Admired Australian (based OS)
Most Admired Defender
Most Admired Midfielder
Most Admired Striker
Most Admired Goalkeeper
Dream choice of which world league?
Major influences:
Words of advice:

Harry Kewell
Paulo Maldini
Roy Keane
Ronaldo
Peter Schmeichel
English Premier
Father and Fiances
"Never Give Up"

Q So ... WHO IS DANNY ALLSOPP?

A I'm born and bred in Melbourne, so I suppose that's a good start. As far as my soccer career goes, I went to the VIS before signing for South Melbourne, where I spent 2 years. I then went to Carlton for about 6 months before moving to England. I've also played for Australia at every youth level so far, and I'm pretty proud of that achievement. I feel I've made big improvements to my game since I went overseas, and I think it's helped me a lot as a player - in fact I'd say I'm a much better player now than how many people might remember me from when I played in Australia, which would be more than a couple of years ago.

Q You've been away from home for quite a while now - what do you miss most?

A Well, I've been away for almost two years and of course I miss my family the most, but quite close behind them is the sun, because I really haven't seen any sun for two years. When we come back here in the break it's winter, so I miss that a lot, and I also miss the familiarity of Melbourne and my friends, but other than that, I don't miss out on much. Oh, and I'm picking up a nice training tan in Adelaide at the moment with the Olyroos as we prepare for the Four Nation Tournament!

Q Pressure is obviously mounting, with the final squad of 18 to be named in around 6 months ... how are your fellow players - and competitors for spots - starting to react to this?

A There's a lot of competition for every position on the park and everyone knows that no-one is guaranteed a spot. Basically, there are 2-3 good players for every position on the team, which really is good for everyone, because while there's competition you're always improving. Raul will of course make the final decision on the team, but for the moment, everyone's fighting hard to impress.

Q What motivates you?

A I don't really need motivation as such, I just love playing and the challenge of playing well really motivates me to do well every time I step onto the park, whether it be for training, or a match.

Q What inspires you?

A I love to score goals and that's really where most strikers get their joy out of playing - you can play well and not score and know you played well, but the real buzz is from putting the ball into the back of the net.

Q LG Socceroo Danny Tiatto is both a Manchester City team-mate and a former Olyroo - does it help, particularly mentally, having him around?

A Yes it does. I've spoken to Danny a few times about playing in the Olympics, and he's given me stories about his experiences at Atlanta. All of his memories of being an Olympian are about how good it was, and now, with the Games in Australia, well, I just can't imagine what it'll be like, provided I make the squad.

Q How would you describe yourself as a player, and where (and why) do you fit into the LG Under-23 Squad?

A I always seem to score goals and I have a fairly good goals-to-game ratio. I'm also a hard working striker, working both defensively and offensively - a lot of the time, people don't realise that I do cover a lot more ground than they actually notice, in fact I think a lot of strikers do that. I've also improved many aspects of my game which were lacking and I'm still improving my game, but my major strength would be my pace, that's what my game revolves around - gives me a yard of space to get a shot in, and I think I've got a good chance.

Q Is there much talk about the Olympics in your part of the world?

A I don't think England's going to be a part of the 2000 Olympics, but the local Manchester papers have taken an interest in what I'm doing, once they've known I was in this squad, and the other players in my team have been fairly interested in it, they know it's a good opportunity for me.

Q Is there any one particular member of this current squad who you feel stands out?

A I think that probably Hayden Foxe stands out - he's got maturity above his years the way he plays, and he's really talented - he's going to go a long way.

Q Is there a particular Olympian who inspires you, and why?

A Kieran Perkins - I've enjoyed watching him swim, and when I think of Australian Olympians, he's always the one who springs to mind, particularly because he's been the underdog so often.

Q And your final words for the Australian public?

A I know what Australians are like, so I'll know they'll be behind us when the Olympics come around, particularly the parochial Melbournites. But that's not to say that the Australian public shouldn't be behind us right now, and at the moment, it's Adelaide's chance to see us in action against some great teams in the 4 Nation Tournament, so what better time to show your support?

CROOKY

Over the past seven weeks Northern Spirit has started to turn the corner with some impressive wins, mainly on the road.

It has proven to everyone that the team can play but the thing we badly lack, and need if we are to challenge for the top six this year, is consistency.

Consistency is the biggest factor in a team's success.

Every team has its day throughout the season and can turn it on under certain circumstances but for a team to be successful it must be consistent.

So far we haven't been. We have put together back-to-back wins only once this year when we followed a victory over Marconi at North Sydney Oval with a gutsy win against Melbourne Knights away from home.

Therein lies the problem with Northern Spirit this year.

One week we play like world beaters and the next we fall into a slumber. It has stopped us from getting any momentum.

Unfortunately many of our losses have also happened at North Sydney Oval, which hasn't given our supporters much to cheer about.

In saying that, the crowds that we perceive as being poor are still more than most clubs can only dream about.

Despite this, we need to be winning at home because we need to get crowds in excess of 10,000 through the gates at North Sydney Oval if we are to continue to help lift Australian soccer to the next level.

And, the only way to get the crowds back is to start winning games at North Sydney Oval.

During the week I heard Arnie say



that we have a terrible home record but have been winning games on the road. He wished it was the other way around.

I'd prefer us to be winning games both at home and away but he is right when he says we need to win for our fans.

On Friday night we play Perth Glory at North Sydney Oval in a match that we need to win, despite Perth's high standing on the NSL ladder.

It has now got to the stage where we have to beat everyone.

Last year the corresponding match was an absolute cracker with Northern Spirit winning 1-0 thanks to a great long-range strike from Michael Cunico in front of more than 17,000 people.

We are all hoping for a repeat this year. The match kicks off at 7.30pm.

Ian Crook
Northern Spirit and England

SIMUNIC FOR SOCCEROOS AND 'BOUTSI' A CHANCE?

By Greg Blake

The bush telegraph says Con Boutsianis is set to get a long-awaited recall into the realm of the mighty Socceroos.

I can tell you that he is certainly being considered.

Flamboyant and often quite brilliant, the Perth Glory star more than deserves his chance - which, by the way, 'Inside Soccer' has been saying since around about the time KISS last toured.

Often judged way harshly for his off-field exploits - both real, imagined and even made up - nothing has ever dulled 'Boutsi's' abilities as a gamebreaker of the high-order.

Truth is, it shouldn't matter a toss if the kid spends his spare time impersonating geraniums at the Botanical Gardens, if he can play he should be in.

End of story.

One player who *Inside Soccer* believes will definitely (injuries notwithstanding) make his long-awaited Socceroo debut is Joe Simunic (below).

We have it on very good author-



Perth Glory's Con Boutsianis: would be a smart choice for the Socceroos

February and Hungary on Feb 23 in Budapest and Czech Republic on March 29.

Good to see Boutsianis' Glory teammate, Vinko Buljasic, back in action off the bench over the last couple of weeks.

The former Victorian, now just a couple of games off his 150 milestone, has been dead stiff with injuries over the years and has been missing from NSL duty since breaking his leg some eight games into last season.

Bad news for all but Carlton supporters, but Andrew Marth reckons he's still about four years or more from giving the caper away at NSL level.

The 'Stabber' is only a couple of ticks away from his 300th game but he, like Bobby Catlin, is showing no signs of wear or tear and is having probably his best season since captaining the Knights to back-to-back titles in 1995 and 1996.

Unofficially the toughest player in the league, I would estimate he is still around 350 bruises - either given or conceded - from ending the anguish of 15 other NSL clubs.



ity that Frank Farina has done what he did with Mark Schwarzer, and convinced the German-based sweeper that lining up with Advance Australia Fair playing before an international is the greatest feeling in the world.

Good onya Frank. The Socceroos play in Chile (versus Bulgaria, Slovakia and Chile) in early

NSL Round 16 PREVIEW

Now that the NSL has global credibility (!) thanks to South Melbourne's exploits, have a look at what is on the menu this weekend in Australia.

In Wollongong the entertainers of the league, the Wolves, take on the very solid Carlton.

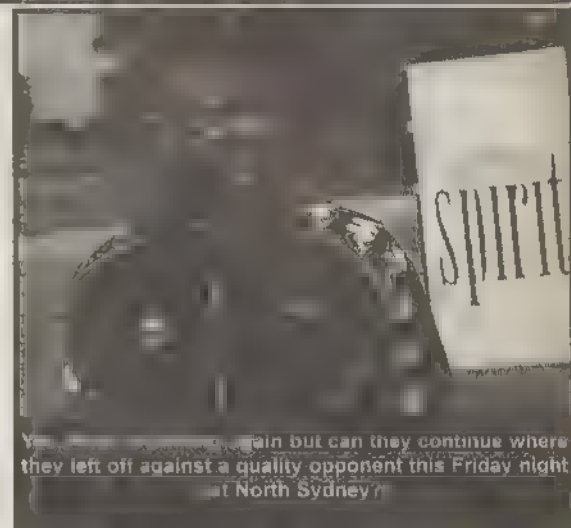
With Stuart Young set to return, it will be a British Battle for Supremacy as the McPherson-led Carlton defence will look to blunt what has become a potent attack.

Blues coach Stuart Munro will be giving his wide players strict instructions to keep in check Chipperfield - his service will be integral to a home win, yet there is the indefatigable Andrew 'Stabber' Marth for Wolves to contend with. Should be well worth a look.

In Sydney Glory meet the rejuvenated (?) Spirit. This will be the litmus test for the home side's latest form upswing.

Glory coach Stange said the crowds at Northern Spirit are good for the game.

"I think we are used to playing in front of big crowds. Every game is difficult for us but we love to play at North Sydney. If we control



Yes, they can but can they continue where they left off against a quality opponent this Friday night at North Sydney?

Robbie Slater - who is aggressive and is a good man for them - then we have a chance."

There is a preview of the Sydney United v Sydney Olympic game on page five, suffice to say it should be well worth seeing, particularly after a loss by Branko's Boys to Lee's Legends.

MARCONI TO PLAY TOP MACEDONIAN SIDE TOMORROW NIGHT

Tomorrow night (Wed Jan 12) Marconi Stallions will play top Macedonian side Pobeda Prilep at Marconi Stadium kicking off at 7.30 pm.

The visitors are currently flying high in the Macedonian First Division, and have four national team players, including leading scorer Nikolec Zraveski.

Marconi coach Eddie Kmcevic sees this game as very useful in keeping his side focussed on its goal of a finals finish.

"They will be a tough side no doubt about. They have players involved in their national team. For us it's important to have a good hitout given we did not play NSL last weekend and we want to be at our best for this weekend's clash at home to Canberra Cosmos."

As for his side's progress Kmcevic was happy with things so far but stressed that "we have not peaked yet. We plan on peaking come finals time."

At Rockdale Soccer Centre around 3,000 were on hand to see Pobeda beat a combined Sydney Macedonian side (largely Rockdale Suns players) 2-1 midweek.

Pobeda is coached by Macedonian national coach Dragan Kanatarovski who played with close friend and former Socceroo Zlatko Nastevski at one stage and turned out as a player for Red Star Belgrade.

The left-footed former Marconi sweeper and midfielder, Blago Kulevski, was also in the Sydney side and is rumoured to be making a comeback with Rockdale, now being coached by long time Banskton player Mile Todoroski.

Before taking on Marconi on Wednesday night the Macedonian side tackled a combined Wollongong side on Sunday, featuring players drawn from theranks of Illawarra Lions, Crinjila and Coniston.

They will move on to Melbourne for further matches.

	(Overall)								(Home)						(Away)					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	15	9	3	3	26	14	30	12	3	3	1	11	7	6	0	2	15	7		
Perth Glory	15	8	4	3	29	17	28	12	5	2	1	19	9	3	2	2	10	8		
Brisbane Strikers	15	8	4	3	25	13	28	12	4	3	1	18	8	4	1	2	7	5		
Carlton	14	7	5	2	27	14	26	13	4	3	1	15	8	3	2	1	12	6		
Wollongong Wolves	15	7	5	3	29	22	26	7	5	0	2	15	10	2	5	1	14	12		
Newcastle Breakers	15	7	5	3	22	19	26	3	4	3	1	15	12	3	2	2	7	7		
Marconi Stallions	14	7	2	5	19	18	23	1	4	0	2	7	7	3	2	3	12	11		
Football Kingz	15	5	5	5	26	27	20	-1	2	3	2	13	15	3	2	3	13	12		
Northern Spirit	15	8	1	6	15	21	19	-6	3	0	4	7	10	3	1	4	8	11		
South Melbourne	14	5	3	6	22	21	18	1	4	2	1	16	7	1	1	5	6	14		
Adelaide Force	15	4	5	6	15	17	17	-2	3	2	2	9	7	1	3	4	6	10		
Gippsland Falcons	15	4	5	6	10	15	17	-5	2	2	3	5	6	2	3	3	5	9		
Parramatta Power	14	4	3	7	23	26	15	-3	2	3	3	11	11	2	0	4	12	15		
Melbourne Knights	15	4	1	10	14	31	13	-17	3	0	4	6	7	1	1	6	8	24		
Canberra Cosmos	15	3	2	10	17	29	11	-12	2	1	5	10	11	1	1	5	7	18		
Sydney United	15	2	3	10	8	23	9	-15	2	1	5	5	10	0	2	5	3	13		

Produced with the assistance of McRopod Concept Sports Systems - www.planet.net.au/~mcropod.

Note: the South Melbourne v Carlton game will now be played on Wed March 1 at 7.30pm

NSL TOP SCORERS:

PAUL FOSTER (Strikers) 11 goals

MICHAEL CURCIJA (SM)	9
ALEX MOREIRA (CAR)	9
CON BOUTSIANIS (PG)	8
SASO PETROVSKI (WW)	8
JOHN BUONAVOGIA (NB)	7
JOEL GRIFFITHS (PP)	7
ESALA MASI (WC)	7
DAMIAN MORI (AC)	7

CROWD COMPARISON:

Cumulative 99/00: 643,305

(Games still to be played)

98/99: 626,364



Langdon's return inspires Spirit cakewalk

NORTHERN SPIRIT 3

Cunico 16, Seal 47, Langdon 67

SYDNEY UNITED 0

Friday night at North Sydney Oval, Sydney. Crowd: 11,772



MATCH STATS:



NORTHERN SPIRIT: J Perosh, M Bingley, L Casserly, J Sobczyk (P Moss 85), T Cranney, P Bilokapic, M Cunico, R Slater (C), D Seal (A Snyder 80), T Perinich, M Langdon (S Catanzaro 69)



SYDNEY UNITED: S Tolios, M Jurilj, K Rastall, N Arrarte, A Moric (M Jermen 46), T Pondeljak, A Genc (C),

T Maric, J Moric (G Saric 69), N Bosevski (S Bozinovski 59) T Palapanis

Yellows:

Northern Spirit: David Seal 47
Sydney United: Joe Moric 16, Nick Bosevski 41

Best Players

3 MATTHEW LANGDON
2 Michael Cunico
1 Matthew Bingley

Referee: Simon Micallef

By Paul Goodwin

Two players who combined so effectively in the opening game of the season to get Northern Spirit's campaign under way with a 2-0 win at Edensor Park, against Sydney United, linked again to rekindle the flame that had almost extinguished in recent weeks and helped their side to a 3-0 win against the same opponents at North Sydney on Friday night.

Matthew Langdon, out of the side for six games with a troublesome injury, returned to the fray and from the moment he first touched the ball appeared to inspire his whole team including its hitherto out-of-sorts striker David Seal.

Langdon had been a clear cut Man-of-the-Match in the first encounter between the two clubs and had gone on to play well in his next seven games, before succumbing to an injury he admitted he

had not heard of before and could not even spell!

His affliction, 'Osteo Pubis', had brought inflammation to the pelvic bone region and he had been restricted to only light training in the days prior to Friday's game.

All that was forgotten when he took the field on Friday.

It was a huge gamble by coach Graham Arnold to pitch him in against Sydney United, but it paid off handsomely. Langdon (right) set up the first two goals in the team's 3-0 win and went on to score the third himself, to warm acclaim, before being substituted, as planned, well before the end.

Significantly, he single-handedly appeared to lift all his colleagues, especially Seal, who had been experiencing wretched luck in front of goal this season, but chased hard all evening, getting the reward of a crisp, headed goal which bore a similarity to the one he had netted in his opening match for his new club.

As had happened in most games at North Sydney this season the home team began brightly with some flowing passing movements and many chances being created. This time that productivity was rewarded with an early goal at last.

It was noticeable that players were having a crack from all angles, many shots being narrowly off-target or collected by United 'keeper Steve Tolios during a frenzied first quarter of an hour.

Spirit coach Graham Arnold revealed after the game that he had been urging his players to have shots like this all season, but for once they followed his instructions.

Langdon was immediately effective with his running on the left flank, tearing the United defence apart, just as he had done in the first round.

There was plenty of width in the Spirit's attacks on both flanks with Luke Casserly and Robbie Slater also making strong headway out wide and providing a much better supply of passes, rather than

speculative crosses, to the front runners Tony Perinich and Seal.

Not that the pair were starved of crosses, either, with Langdon's deadly deliveries from the flanks bringing the first two goals.

Sydney United, depleted on this occasion by the loss of former Spirit player Eddy Bosnar, on Olyroo duty, and a string of injuries, found the pace too hot and rarely got going. Missing veteran skipper Velemir Kupresak was also a huge blow for them on this occasion.

The visitors' only chances came when Spirit took their foot off the pedal, briefly, a couple of times during the game and they then failed to find a way past the in-form former United keeper,

John Perosh, now firmly established as the Spirit number 1.

Matthew Bingley also kept a cool head and organised the defence superbly as sweeper with young Michael Cunico pushing forward into the midfield and having probably his best game for the club.

With Langdon on fire, Cunico getting a grip on the midfield and Bingley putting his stamp on the game from the back, the rest of the side lent huge support and it could be said that not one player had a poor game.

Seal made giant strides on his previous performances, Troy Cranney was effectively destructive in the middle, negating any threat by the visitors, while Perinich proved a willing ally for Seal up front.

Robbie Slater, the skipper, also had his best game in weeks, appearing to show no ill-effects from recent injuries and benefitted from the collective work-rate around him by the other players.

An early cross from Slater saw Cranney just fail to connect with a header and Bingley, similarly, could not reach a Casserly cross a minute later at the far post.

Langdon did what the side had been threatening to do for weeks; allow his side to score an early goal. He sent in an angled cross from deep on the left and Cunico made a diagonal run through the defence from the right, to the near post, where he glanced his header cleverly past Tolios into the top right corner. The game was only 15 minutes old.

It was a magical goal to break the tension of weeks of near misses by the side in its hitherto fruitless first half endeavours at Spirit Park.

Three minutes later Spirit almost scored again.

Slater crossed from the left, Perinich nodded the ball on at the near post and Seal left it for Cunico who could only find the side netting at the other side of the goal. It was a big let-off for United.

The game continued to produce chances for the home side, Seal smashing a 30 yard drive which Tolios brilliantly pushed away for a corner on 26 minutes and then soon after Seal getting his head to a poor clearance and the ball falling invitingly for Perinich who steered the ball

wide, from right in front, with Tolios exposed.

Sydney United had a couple of openings. Nahuel Arrarte hit one from fully 40 yards which Perosh got down to well in the 37th and in the shadows of half time wily stand in skipper, Aytec Genc, threaded through a delightful pass for Tom Pondeljak to go on and face Perosh, wide on the left.

Pondeljak had little angle to play with, but his shot skimmed the right post as it went away to safety, but with an Edmundo-like finish it might well have been a vital equaliser for his side.

The second half began explosively for Spirit and attacking the Bob-stand-end as they like to do after the break, the side soon posted their second goal of the evening.

Slater did well to win possession and find Langdon on the left and the little wingman got to the byline cleverly before delivering a perfect cross to the far post where Seal headed firmly past Tolios with a crisp, angled finish.

United responded when Pondeljak drew a good save from Perosh to a low shot from close range in the 51st.

Cunico almost made it three in the 65th when he just failed to meet a pass from Perinich after sound work by Casserly on the right.

Two minutes later it was all over for United.

Casserly played a short corner on the left to Langdon who took the ball into the penalty area, made space and smashed a right footer into the roof of Tolios's net to the roar of the Spirit fans in the Bob Stand behind his goal.

The injection of Simon Catanzaro also brought some more inspired play as Seal and Langdon made way for both the former AIS star and Hornsby Heights youngster Adam Snyder.

Catanzaro was the first to come on and combined well with Seal and later Perinich and Slater to go close to scoring twice.

At the end, it was a more than satisfying win against the bottom side, but Spirit coach Graham Arnold was quick to remind everyone that consistency was what was needed and he had seen good performances before, especially in some away games, only for the side to falter at its next outing.

He warned that the forthcoming Perth Glory game would be a much sterner test and the team will not be able to slacken off, however briefly, as they did against United at the 25 minute mark and towards the end of this game.

Explaining that he made his decision to risk Langdon just two days prior to the game, Arnold agreed that the team had missed his pace out wide and missed it badly.

Langdon, himself, was not expecting to do much more than last out the 70 minutes, so his extraordinary impact was a huge bonus.

He found his rhythm from the moment he first received the ball and his level of involvement in the game probably surprised him as much as it did his teammates, after such a long lay off.

The larger crowd, boosted by the Matildas' international curtain-raiser against Sweden, gave the team and Langdon, when he came off the field, a rousing reception and they should be back in even greater numbers for the crucial clash with the Glory this coming Friday.

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Heady days in Newcastle



NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 3

Moore 19, McManus 71, Harper 72.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2

Mendez 34, Macallister 81.

Friday night at Breakers Stadium, Newcastle. Crowd 6,907.

MATCH STATS:

NEWCASTLE

BREAKERS:

Catlin, Pryce, Roberts (Trpcevski 58), McManus, Sprod, Dodd, Wilson (Smith 81), Tancheski 66), Wieczorek, Harper, Moore

SYDNEY OLYMPIC:

Bouhoutsos, Zoricich, Baillie, Juric, Phillips (Kohler 75), Cardozo, Kalantzis, Mendez, Wilson, Zorbas, Tome (Macallister 70)

Yellow:

Olympic: Mendez 41, Kalantzis 42, Zoricich 73, Juric 74

Red Cards:

Breakers: Dodd 45

Best Players:

3. BRAD WIECZOREK (BREAKERS)
2. Andy Harper (Breakers)
1. Ante Juric (Olympic)

By Michael Kmet

The Newcastle Breakers extended their unbeaten run to a club record eight matches as they culled another highflying club in Sydney Olympic last Friday night. A crowd of 6,907, the second biggest in the club's history, braved miserable conditions to witness Newcastle fight back after losing midfielder Travis Dodd to a red card on the stroke of half time.

The large and noisy crowd created a carnival atmosphere at Breakers Stadium and the home team rewarded their support with an attacking and impressive display up to half time, and a spirited and 'never say die' defensive effort in the second half.

The Breakers have now amassed twenty from a possible twenty-four points in the last eight games and are surely the form team of the competition. In those eight games they have beaten premier-ship contenders Brisbane, Perth, and now Olympic, and snatched an away draw to Carlton.

A joyous Lee Sterrey is over the moon about his team's performance so far. "It's a pleasure to coach these blokes", Sterrey said in the post-match press conference. "What they lack in ability they make up in passion and pride, and Newcastle has been known for that over the years in a lot of sporting teams. I don't care where we end up - it's only early days yet. I'm proud to coach these blokes. They have great character and I think that's a very important ingredient in any good sporting team."

Veteran Andy Harper echoed this sentiment. Harper, one of the few non-Novocastrians in the club, also highlighted the character of Newcastle teams. "It's unthinkable to come away with a win from

that side with a man down... It's a tribute to the Newcastle people to come out in the rain in such numbers to support this side. It's a reflection of the whole area. The whole Hunter region is summed up in the Newcastle Breakers and probably similar with the Newcastle Knights (Newcastle's national rugby league team). It's just that Newcastle spirit. It's very special to be part of, I'll tell you."

The Breakers' intensity over the past eight games has been the catalyst in some of their great victories. This intensity has put pressure on opposition's mid-field and attack, and has forced teams to play poorly.

This ethos reached dizzying heights in this match as the normally silky Olympic outfit created few chances and were pressured into too many mistakes, particularly under set pieces in defence.

The opening minutes of the match started at a frantic pace as both teams were feeding off the buzz of the raucous crowd and the game's pace rarely slowed throughout the match.

In the 18th minute Newcastle midfielder Mark Wilson found himself free on the right. Wilson hit a superb ball across goal that just skidded past striker Johnny Buonavoglia.

ner located an unmarked Chris Zoricich. Zoricich's header went straight to Bob Catlin who showed good reflexes to tip it over the bar.

Olympic's joy did come five minutes later thanks to some individual brilliance by Mendez. Ante Juric pinpointed a terrific ball to Mendez.

Mendez jinked past two players and rounded Glenn Sprod as he finished superbly to place the ball in the bottom inside of the far post.

The rest of the half saw both teams try to gain ascendancy with physical play. Mendez and Chris Kalantzis were booked for crude tackles and then the Breakers' night turned disastrous when Travis Dodd was marched for a terrible studs up challenge on Scott Baillie. Dodd was dribbling the ball but the wet surface saw him lose control and he came very late to clean up Baillie as he tried to get the ball.

The numerical disadvantage did not deter the Breakers from creating the better of opportunities in the second half. In the 55th a clever one-two between Brad Wieczorek and Andy Harper put Wieczorek through, but his shot hit the side netting.

The Breakers were forced to make substitutions in the 58th and 66th minute respectively when Andy Roberts and Buonavoglia had to come off due to injuries. Both were carrying knocks into the game and it shows the tenacity of the Newcastle club that they were able to start the match.

Newcastle's night turned to ecstasy when they converted two goals in the space of two minutes at the 70th minute mark.

Substitute Vasko Trpcevski again found Olympic wanting under set pieces when his corner was poorly cleared by the Sydney defence. The resulting poor clearance fell to stopper Todd McManus who swivelled and smashed the ball into the net.

A minute later Breakers Stadium erupted as Newcastle went further ahead.

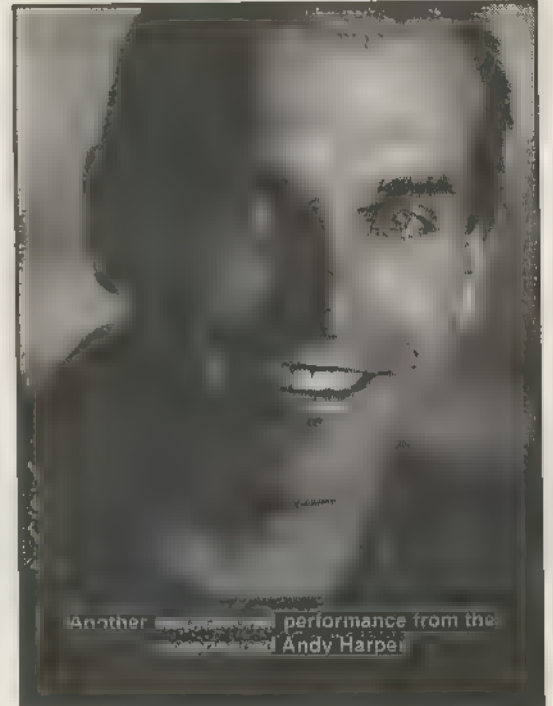
Amazingly the Breakers found themselves in a three on two situation with Olympic throwing too many men forward.

Andy Harper played the ball to Brad Wieczorek on the right who first timed the ball to a free Vasko Trpcevski.

Trpcevski tried to round Bouhoutsos but was fouled in the process as referee Matthew Breeze pointed to the penalty spot. Andy Harper was promoted to the penalty duties after Shane Pryce's previous two misses, and he comfortably slotted the ball low and into the right hand side net.

As the rain became stronger Olympic did not give up the fight. Australian Under 17 representative Dylan Macallister gave Sydney some hope in the 81st minute when he reduced the score line to 3-2. Macallister drilled a shot just outside the eighteen-yard box. Fortunately his shot hit Damien Smith in the back and the deflection wrong-footed Catlin in the slippery conditions.

Olympic nearly equalised five minutes before time when an Ante Juric header from a Mendez corner was brilliantly saved by Catlin.



Another performance from the star of the night, Andy Harper.

The Breakers should have extended their lead four minutes into injury time when youngster Chris Tancheski missed a relatively easy one-on-one opportunity.

Again it was Andy Harper who was the provider as he glided past Paul Kohler and set Tancheski free, but in the end it did not matter as the Breakers held on to one of the most remarkable wins in the club's history.

Playing with ten men against the competition leaders and putting in such a convincing performance will long be remembered by the Breakers faithful.

Olympic coach Branko Culina lamented his team's loss. "I thought we would win before the game. Newcastle didn't beat us. We beat ourselves. The referee and ourselves combined to win the game for Newcastle... we contributed to the loss but I don't think officials should contribute to results."

The packed media conference wondered if Culina was watching the same game, as it was in fact the Newcastle crowd that booed referee Breeze as he left the pitch after the game.

Olympic's Gabriel Mendez proved that too many teams and players are not taking Newcastle's run seriously by stating "We had the ball most of the game but it's important to get the ball in the back of the net ... you are going to win games by going out and trying to score goals - especially at home. You've got to try and play football and entertain the crowd. Newcastle get eleven players behind the ball and breakaway in attack - even at home. You can't win championships like that. At the end of the day if they are happy to sit mid-table so be it."

This is a Newcastle side that has put three goals past Perth Glory and Sydney Olympic respectively; not many teams this year will be able to achieve that.

Newcastle skipper Shane Pryce's reply to this attitude was succinct. "I hope teams continue to underestimate us. However the more we continue to string these results together there will be teams looking into our back fence and taking us more seriously."

Newcastle is continuing their NSL run while teams and opposition coaches are dismissing their form. As long as teams continue to dismiss Newcastle's results they are danger of being another Breakers scalp.



Olympic's Ante Juric. A clean act at the back for the star of the night, Ante Juric.

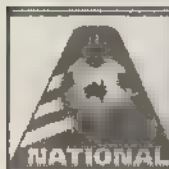
The ensuing play resulted in a Breakers corner. Glenn Sprod curled the set piece into the direction of keeper George Bouhoutsos who could only punch weakly to an alert Glenn Moore whose looping header gave him two goals in as many weeks.

Moore's header looped over five players crowding the box much to the joy of the several hundred Rowdies behind that goal.

The Breakers could have gone two up in the 25th minute when Travis Dodd put a through ball to the speedy Buonavoglia. Unfortunately the ball skidded too far in the greasy conditions as Bouhoutsos did well to clean up the ball and the rampant Buonavoglia.

Olympic had their first chance in the 29th minute when a Gabriel Mendez cor-

Cosmos reject shoots down home club



ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 1 Kemp 53 CANBERRA COSMOS 0

Friday night at Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide. Crowd 4,367.

MATCH STATS:



ADELAIDE FORCE:

Knezevic, Tobin, Talladira (Hornjik 8), Kemp, Veart, Sabljak, Vidmar, Costanzo, Hassell, Pelosi, Kim.



CANBERRA COSMOS:

Konstantinou, Milin (Prenzowski 76), Popovich, Burt, Purdue (Zwangobani 83), Polak (Conlon 87), Winnie, Watkins, Hamilton, Kolpak, Gonzalez.

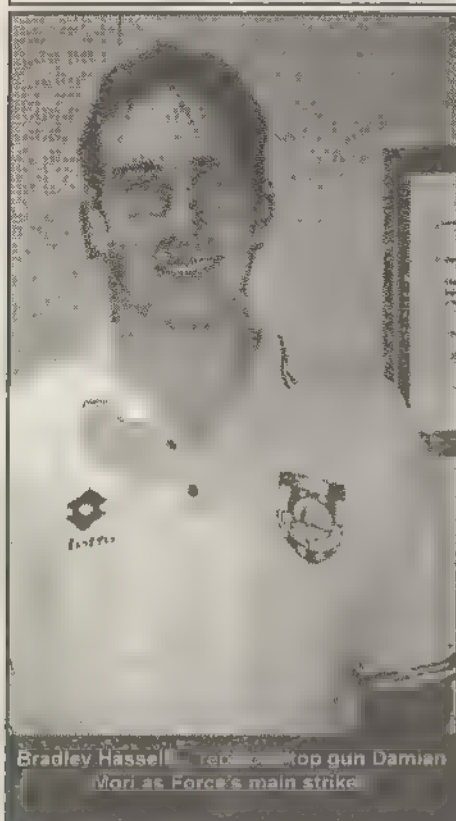
Yellows:

Force: Kemp 45, Hassell 90
Cosmos: Gonzalez 49, Burt 62

BEST PLAYERS:

3 TOBIN (FORCE)
2 Hassell (Force)
1 Polak (Cosmos)

Referee: Edward Lennie



By Margaret Bowden and Donald Campbell OAM

One moment of magic in an otherwise scrappy game was all it took to start Adelaide City Force off on the winning foot for their home game in 2000.

With no Damian Mori, the fans were apprehensive. But they found an unlikely hero in young Matthew Kemp, normally a bench warmer.

Ironically, Kemp had played one or two games with Canberra but was advised by coach Tom Sermanni to look elsewhere. So he came to Adelaide City and on Friday night showed just what he is capable of.

Canberra, missing influential Harry James, Ivo de Jesus and Alex Castro,

looked all at sea from the start, while City started aggressively.

Carlo Talladira, Bradley Hassell playing up front in Mori's place, Aurelio Vidmar and Claudio Pelosi combined to threaten the Cosmos' defence in the first minute.

Carl Veart sent in an opportunistic high lob in the second minute, but Cosmos keeper Angelo Konstantinou, looking into the sun, caught the ball.

In the fifth minute, however, midfielder menace Talladira went down with a knee injury. City coach Zoran Matic replaced him with Atilla Hornjik, reshuffling the team to slot Hornjik in at the back. But without Talladira City lost their early rhythm.

Canberra never really found any rhythm. When they did look dangerous through Jason Polak, David Milin, Glen Kolpak and Gabriel Gonzalez, they were subdued by 88.5 Coast FM Bianco Builders' Player of the Match Alex Tobin, defensive workhorse Angelo Costanzo and reborn rampaging defender Veart.

Milin managed to elude them in the ninth minute, leaping at the far post for a free header from a curling Polak free kick on the left, but Wilson Knezevic made a last gasp fingertip save.

City replied through a Hassell-Vidmar combination, the resulting shot rebounding to Dong Ki Kim on the right edge of the box. Kim slammed the ball back at goal only to see it hit the cross bar.

Five minutes later, Veart boomed in a shot from 20 metres from directly in front. Konstantinou dropped it and Kim pounced again and crossed the ball to Nick Sabljak on the left, who blasted his shot over the bar.

Hassell, Veart, Vidmar and Kemp set up a string of passing sequences, but the finish just wasn't there.

Pelosi was the next culprit, shooting high and wide from close range on the right.

Tobin began making runs down the left, combining with Vidmar and switching play to Costanzo, foraging down the right, who laid off passes for Sabljak and Hassell in the centre.

Each build-up promised a reward, but time and again the fans were disappointed, not to mention the players and Matic.

Would this be one of those games for City - dominating play but squandering scoring chances? Would Canberra hit them against the run of play and score the winner?

In the 21st minute it seemed City would suffer this fate at the feet of Kolpak, who won the ball in midfield, passed back to Toplica Popovich and streaked upfield.

Popovich laid the ball off to Polak in the centre and Polak sent a defence-splitting pass to Kolpak on the right hand side of the box.

Kolpak finished with a deceptive shot which was headed for the far left side of the net, but Knezevic just brushed it with his glove to deflect it for a corner.

A collective sigh of relief rose from the fans, while the cheer squad behind the goal drummed and chanted for Knezevic as Popovich headed a shot over the bar from the resultant corner.

Play swung back in City's favour, with shots from Sabljak and Pelosi in

quick succession Konstantinou saved the first; David Winnie blocked the second.

Two minutes later Popovich put in a crude tackle on Pelosi 30 metres out from goal on the left side.

Vidmar slammed the free kick into the area where the advancing Hassell just failed to connect.

Canberra then weathered a succession of City corners, the final clearance falling to Vidmar who passed wide to Kim on the right for another shot - again over the bar!

Veart bobbed up under Konstantinou in an attempt to head in from a long ball into the box, but the keeper knocked the ball clear.

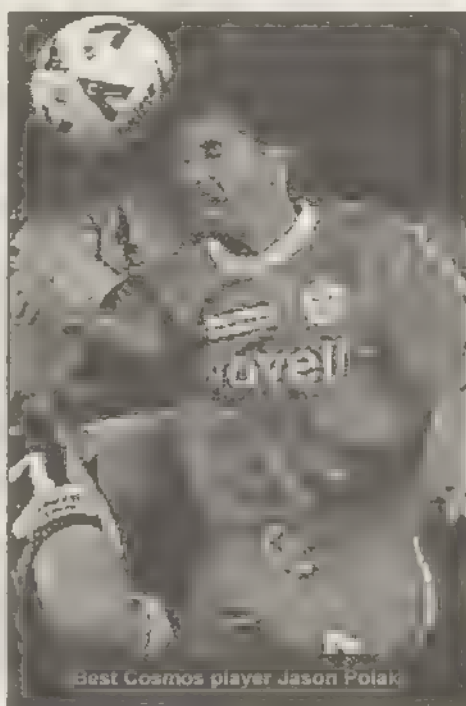
The Canberra defence looked decidedly unsettled, taking several attempts to clear the ball, but when they did, they had another chance to score against the run of play - Daniel Watkins slicing a low shot just wide of the left hand post.

City replied, with Hassell in the centre passing wide to Pelosi on the right - what a shot! But straight at Konstantinou.

Five minutes to half time and Canberra began to turn the tables, stepping up the pace and pressuring the City defence.

Burt sent Milin through on the left but he shot into the side netting.

Burt then sent speedy Gonzalez away down the right, but Tobin dispossessed him to send City into counter



attack

Hassell again was instrumental in setting up Pelosi for a header after a long pass from Costanzo - over the bar.

Polak sent in another swinging free kick from the left but it eluded everyone.

Pelosi ran down the right and switched play to Veart on the left. Veart danced through the Canberra defence and shot from a tight angle - off the cross bar!



Force's captain Alex Tobin leading his charge back to form.

Canberra had the final chance of the half with another free kick from Polak after Kemp cut down Milin on the left and had the dubious honour of being referee E. M. Lennie's first caution. Fortunately for Kemp, his indiscretion ended with Knezevic plucking Polak's inswinger out of the air. Half time - 0-0.

What did Tom Sermanni say to Canberra at half time?

Kolpak smashed a shot at Knezevic inside a minute, forcing the keeper into a scrambled save.

Gonzalez and Polak taunted the City midfield and defence with a brilliant wall-passing sequence which came undone when Vidmar pounced on a mistimed pass. Gonzalez, desperate to regain possession, crunched Vidmar's ankles - another name in Lennie's book.

Vidmar received more of the same from Burt, but the big defender escaped without a caution. This stirred Viddie into action, masterminding a series of attacking moves with Tobin, Costanzo, Hassell and Sabljak. Canberra was on the back foot again.

Then came the magic moment. In a move reminiscent of the best seen in the world, Hassell dispossessed Purdue in the midfield and passed to Sabljak who kept possession under extreme pressure on the 18 yard line.

Sabljak backheeled for Kemp who knocked the ball back to Vidmar and sprinted forward. Vidmar stroked the return ball through for Kemp who coolly slotted it under Konstantinou - 1-0 City after 53 minutes.

Unfortunately, there was little more magic in the game.

City continued to shoot wide and high of the target, while most of Canberra's chances came from free kicks.

The home side had their last chance to score right on the final whistle when Hassell pulled down Gonzalez as he roared towards the box, but again the free kick came to nothing.

Hassell was the last player to grace referee Lennie's cautions book.

Marth pops up to spoil Kingz' party



CARLTON 1

Marth 93

FOOTBALL KINGZ 1

own goal (Deans) 11

Friday night at Olympic Park, Melbourne. Crowd 3,034



Thompson
(Markovski 54)



MATCH STATS:

CARLTON: Anastasiadis, Deans, Atkinson, Douglas, Marth, Slater, Lapsansky, Anthopoulos (Packer 67), Terminello, Conroy (Moreira 54),

KINGZ: Batty, Osman, Bunce, Perry, Stergiopoulos, Vicelich, Jackson, Middleby, Ngata (Moya 94), Mennillo (Silva 66), Riddle (Elrick 74)

Yellow Cards:

Kingz: Vicelich 53, Perry 59, Jackson 83

BEST PLAYERS:

3. BATTY (KINGZ)
2. Ngata (Kingz)
1. Marth (Carl)

Referee: Gerry Connolly

By Kevin Christopher

After trailing for over eighty minutes, Carlton escaped with a point from their clash with the Kingz when Andrew Marth scored a late equaliser deep into injury time last Friday night.

It was no more than the Blues deserved, although the Kingz will feel disappointed at having conceded a goal so late in the game after frustrating the home side for most of the evening.

Central to their stoic defensive effort was international goalkeeper Jason Batty, one of six full internationals in the Kingz team, and with Sean Douglas and Mark Atkinson lining up for the Blues you almost needed reminding this was an Australian league match!

But Batty was the Kiwi responsible for the home side remaining scoreless so long, as he repeatedly plucked crosses and hopeful long balls off the heads of the Carlton strikers, as well as providing a couple of other memorable moments.

Carlton enjoyed the majority of possession in the early stages although neither side managed to string together more than four or five passes. In fact the first twenty minutes was dominated by referee Gerry Connolly who was forced to award free kicks at the rate of one per minute.

The highly-charged Kingz were the chief culprits, but Carlton were unable to punish their opponents with the free kicks lacking both imagination and penetration.

The stop/start nature of events prevented the game from settling into any sort of rhythm but amidst the discord the visitors opened the scoring in a fashion rarely seen at NSL level.

After Harry Ngata's initial near post

corner was repelled behind, his second attempt was dummied by Stergiopoulos and finished up in the net off the right hip of Craig Deans. Comical stuff, and not something expected of any national league team, let alone one with title ambitions.

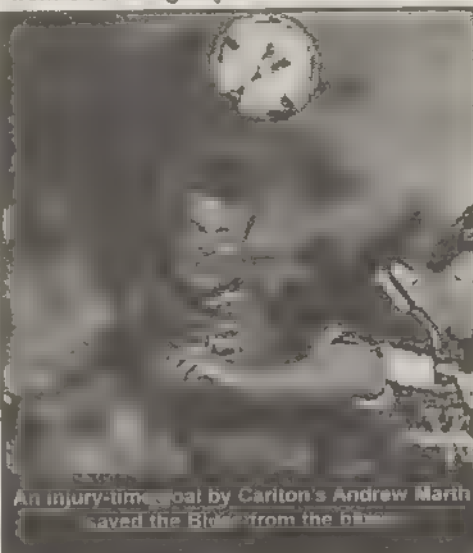
The home side should have equalised after twenty-one minutes, when a Stuart Slater piledriver was too hot for Batty to hold, but Archie Thompson could only push the scraps against the right hand post before the Kingz defence managed to clear the danger.

The remainder of the half provided little excitement for the paying public, although Thompson had a couple of half chances which Batty dealt with comfortably, while at the other end Dean Anastasiadis was rarely in difficulty despite the best efforts of Stu Riddle, Dino Mennillo and the hard working Ngata.

Credit should be given to both defences however, with Che Bunce and Jon Perry in particular having fine games at the back for the visitors.

The second half opened in spectacular fashion, with a David Terminello thunderbolt forcing the save of the game out of Batty, flying through the air at full stretch to tip the ball wide of the target.

After fifty-three minutes Batty was the centre of attention again. After Ivan Vicelich was cautioned for a foul on Andrew Marth on the corner of the penalty area, Lubo Lapsansky's subsequent curling shot was redirected toward goal from close range by the outstretched foot



of Marth. But somehow Batty managed to collect the ball after it had squeezed through his legs and threatened to roll over the goal line.

By this stage the Kingz were content to leave Riddle up front on his own and it was left to the midfielders to conjure counter attacks. One such effort came from Robert Middleby, who took off on a solo run, surging past Craig Deans and zeroing on in goal before the lanky defender managed to execute a last-ditch tackle as the former Aussie youth interna-

tional shaped to shoot from ten metres.

With fifteen minutes left on the clock substitute Aaron Silva almost doubled the visitors' lead but his fine shot was well turned away by Anastasiadis at full stretch.

Carlton's efforts had become more desperate by now, and Marth's attempted chip from twenty-five metres was an indication that the Blues were starting to feel the pinch.

But with the game entering the ninety-third minute and the Kingz attempting to use their final substitution, Lapsansky lobbed a hopeful ball into the box and Marth managed to loop a header over Batty to get his team out of jail.

Coming off the back off the previous 0-0 home draw against Newcastle, Carlton coach Stuart Munro was understandably subdued after the match.

"Because we missed the early chances we possibly followed on from the last game against Newcastle. I think because it happened so soon again the players got frustrated.

"We stuck at it and eventually got a reward but it's not a particularly good Carlton performance, and I said that to the players. I think we can do an awful lot better than that.

"I thought the tempo we set tonight wasn't us, it was just too flat.

"To be fair, they played like a team away from home. I thought they were very good, especially in the first half hour. They came here to get a draw but they could have won the game."

Naturally, Munro was disappointed with the nature in which the early goal was conceded.

"You put people in positions, you've got guys on the post and guys in front of the six yard box. To lose a goal like that is just pathetic.

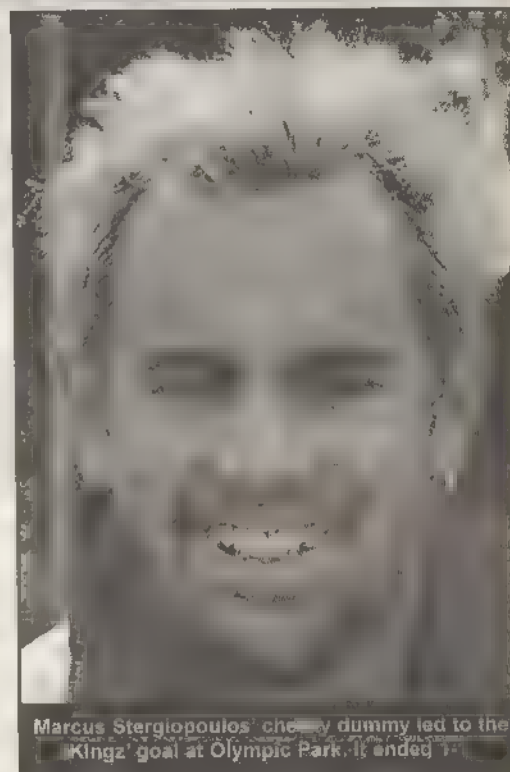
"Full marks to their goalkeeper, I thought he had three or four outstanding saves. He had a couple of lucky ones but I thought he made his own luck and had a terrific game.

"He was unlucky to get caught in the end. We were glad to get the equaliser because I felt we deserved it."

However Kingz assistant coach Shane Rufer rejected the idea his side played for a draw.

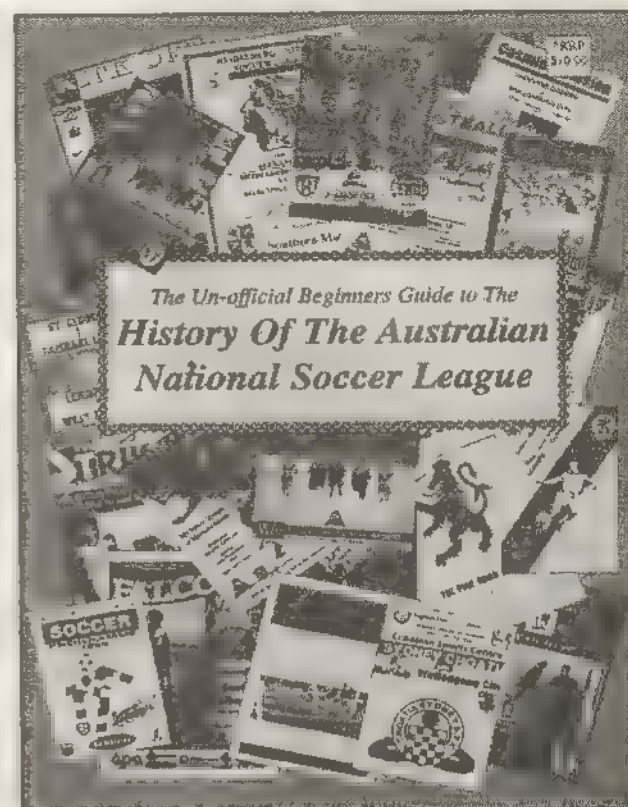
"We try to win every game. For us it's still a learning process. We've come a long way since the first game (against Carlton) when we lost 3-0.

"Psychologically for us it was very, very important to get a result because there was six points



between us and now we have two week-ends where there is no game. When the players come back from their New Zealand tour the table will be a lot different and points on the board is a lot better than games in hand."

Although the Kingz now have a couple of weeks off due to the New Zealand national side playing in China, the remaining squad members will hardly be idle, with a couple of matches against the national under 23 team penciled in.



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Foster regains touch as Strikers hit four



BRISBANE STRIKERS 4

Harris 45', Foster 48' 55', Grierson 51'

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 0

Saturday night at Suncorp Metway Stadium, Brisbane. Crowd 2,972.

MATCH STATS:



STRIKERS: 1. Bolton, 2. Gwynne, 3. Stefanutto, 4. Davidson (5. Bell 72'), 6. Ditton (10. Srhoj 72'), 9. Foster, 11. Hews 13. McLaren, 14. North, 16. Grierson, 17. Harris (19. Baldwin 64')



KNIGHTS: 30 Acevski, 2. Rajher (11. Trupkovic 64'), 4. Kovacevic, 5. Vudakin, 7. Silic, 9. Kelic, 12. Abbas (14. Magdic 57'), 16. Kiratzoglou, 17. Vassallo, 23. Reda (10. Urlovic 57'), 25. Cervinski

Yellow Cards:

Brisbane: Brad Ditton 17', Jeromy Harris 21', Paul Foster 23'
Melbourne: Alex Kiratzoglou 23', Paul Magdic 68'

BEST PLAYERS:

1: JADE NORTH (BRISBANE)
2: Paul Foster (Brisbane)
3: Peter Grierson (Brisbane)

Referee: Mark Shield



Paul Foster ... two goals ... some sight after a barren spell

By Cameron Atfield

Goal-scoring machine Paul Foster regained his form with two goals in Brisbane's 4-0 drubbing of the Melbourne Knights at Suncorp Metway Stadium on Saturday night.

It took the Strikers just three minutes to stamp their authority on the game.

Jeromy Harris had his headed shot easily taken by Knights keeper Lupce Acevski, and barely 30 seconds later Australian U/17 representative Jade North blasted a thunderous long-range shot just wide.

It was a good sign for the youngster who continued his impressive form with a man-of-the-match performance.

On the other end of the age scale, early NSL scoring pacesetter Foster came out determined to break his barren run of five games.

He should have had the home side ahead in the 14th minute when he blew a great opportunity in front of an empty goal.

A poor clearance was played back by Peter Grierson, and both Foster and Acevski challenged for the ball. Acevski came out second best, giving Foster a clear shot on goal. His weak effort gave the Knights defence enough time to get back and clear the ball to safety.

Despite their domination, the Strikers were looking vulnerable on the counter attack.

Melbourne's Brandon Vassallo tested Brisbane keeper Clint Bolton with a cracking long-range effort 18 minutes in.

Bolton parried the shot into the path of the lurking Adrian Cervinski, but Strikers defender Shane Stefanutto's intervention was enough to allow Bolton to regather the ball.

The scrappy, at times ill-tempered match threatened to boil over in the 21st minute when, in an act of stupidity, Alex Kiratzoglou retaliated to a tackle from behind on teammate Cervinski by Harris.

As Cervinski lay curled over on the pitch, Kiratzoglou shoved into Harris, which sparked an all-in altercation.

For his efforts, Kiratzoglou was lucky not to be shown red by referee Mark Shield, who produced two yellow cards in the aftermath - Kiratzoglou for the Knights and Foster for the Strikers.

Harris' challenge on Cervinski also earned him a booking.

The match simmered below boiling point for some time with plenty of heated exchanges between players, and Brisbane continued their control of play.

It was no surprise when North, who was involved in most of the Strikers' attacking forays, set up the first Brisbane goal.

His pinpoint accurate cross sailed past several Knights defenders to find Harris, who tapped the ball into the back of the net deep into stoppage time before the break.

The goal allowed the Strikers to go into the break with a well-deserved lead.

If the Knights found Harris' late goal disheartening, the first 10 minutes of the second half would have made them wonder why they bothered making the long trip from Melbourne.

Minutes after the restart of play, Foster broke his recent goalscoring drought with a great angled left-footer.

Grierson provided a through ball to Foster from near the half way line, and he notched up his 10th goal of the season with a shot that left Acevski with no chance.

Three minutes later, Grierson turned from provider to scorer with an easy goal.

Knights import Murtala Toyin Abbas made a mess of clearing a Harris cross, and Grierson latched on to the ball and was never going to miss from such close range.

The Knights barely had time to regroup when they conceded another goal four minutes later.

Again, it was the NSL's leading goalscorer Foster who did the honours.



He got on to the end of a weighted cross and looped his header over the hapless Acevski.

After this avalanche of goals, the match settled down considerably. The next real chance fell, oddly enough, to the Knights, four minutes from full time.

Mark Silic's free kick from just outside the box had Bolton diving to his right to pull off a spectacular save.

Despite this effort, the Knights never looked in the game and they would have been relieved when Breeze blew the full-time whistle.

Knights coach Vlado Vanis was devastated after the match.

"They outplayed us everywhere. They were fitter, they were faster. Always first on the ball," he said.

"The last minute of the first half really finished the game. We never got back into it after that goal."

The pressure of coaching the former NSL superpower was starting to show in Vanis' face.

"I've got a very hard job in front of me," he said.

Strikers coach John Kosmina was, predictably, a bit more upbeat than his rival.

"We got a fair bit of possession and that certainly made us comfortable," he said.

Kosmina said Paul Foster's goals came at an opportune time.

"Fossie needed to score tonight as he was starting to lose confidence and get frustrated," he said.

Foster will miss next week's away trip to Gippsland after receiving his fourth yellow card.

The win puts the Strikers in second position on the NSL table, but Kosmina refused to be drawn into predicting a serious championship challenge.

He preferred to take the standard "week by week" line.

"If we don't go down to Gippsland and get a result, then the good work of the past few weeks goes out the window," he said.

Kosmina will face a selection headache, with the return of Chay Hews from a stint with Bellmare Hiratsuka in Japan and Joeys Jade North and Wayne Srhoj in the Strikers' playing

ranks.

"It's a good headache to have," he said.

"We've got a lot of competition for places at the moment and that's a good thing."

Sadly, however, the biggest talking point was still the off-field drama that has been dogging the club in recent weeks.

The anti-Carrara sentiment was evident amongst the vocal but small crowd who distributed fliers around the ground, and Strikers chairman Tony Petty took time out to sit with the chanting supporters during some of the match to discuss his position with them.

SU43 - Brazil or not Brazil? Who really cares anymore?



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Brilliant first half earns Glory home win



PERTH GLORY 1 Ergic 15 GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0

Sunday night at Perth Oval, Perth. Crowd 12,199.

MATCH STATS:



PERTH GLORY:
Petkovic, Thorp, Naven,
Harnwell, Trajkovski,
Ergic, Halpin, Edgar
(Buljabasic 92), Miller
(Afkos 63), Despotovski
(Buljan 63), Boutsianis.



**GIPPSLAND
FALCONS:** Jevdjovic,
Hutchinson (Savage 75),
Gotis, Marcina (Katz
75), Fak, Kakos, Bell,
Vargas (Robertson 88), Nilo, McNichol.

Yellow Cards:

Glory: Boutsianis 80
Falcons: Nilo 48, Vargas, Durakovic,
Gotis.

BEST PLAYERS:

3. HALPIN (GLORY)
2. Naven (Glory)
1. Harnwell (Glory)

Referee: Con Diomis

By Dennis Gedling

Perth Glory moved up into the top two with a 1-0 victory over a gallant Gippsland Falcons at Perth Oval. Teenage star Ivan Ergic returned to the score sheet for the first time in a month putting away the only goal of the game with a simple tap in from an excellent Harnwell pass.

The home side's first half performance was one of their strongest displays of the season, perhaps their best.

Glory showed how they could destroy opposition sides with their array of skills that mesmerized a half-asleep Falcons unit.

The second half was one of pure boredom as the Gippsland side fought to get back into the match, two shots being saved well by the Glory keeper.

Perth came into this game without Alistair Edwards, who phoned coach Bernd Stange complaining of flu in the morning. This left the door open for Olyroo Peter Buljan to make his long awaited return to the team having missed the entire season thus far with injury.

Hamilton Thorp started at centre back taking the place of Edwards in the starting line up, Edgar Junior was moved to midfield and Boutsianis up front whilst Buljan made his debut from the bench.

Gippsland was missing Robbie Puca and coach Jeff Hopkins was also missing due to injury but experienced Scot Sandy Robertson also made his return after long-term injury problems for Gippsland.

The first major incident of the game occurred when Boutsianis received a pass in the box and tried a confident chip over the keeper which went over the bar, his easier option would have been to pass to an unmarked Despotovski on the far post.

This was the first of many chances that went begging over the next 90 minutes.

utes.

After 11 minutes Thorp had a good header saved by the Gippsland keeper after out-muscling the visitors' defence.

It only took 15 minutes of complete Glory domination to get a result.

The breakthrough came when an excellent pass from Halpin found Harnwell who had moved up from defence, he preferred to pass instead of shooting, finding an unmarked Ergic who slotted the ball in with the Gippsland defence at sixes and sevens.

The domination continued after the goal with the Glory displaying great confidence. Despotovski first made a great run tearing the opposition defence apart but his shot let him down.

Ergic had another chance but shot wide and then the easiest chance of the day fell to Miller who received the ball just outside the area after another home team move that left Gippsland with their head spinning. His relatively easy shot went over the bar.

The Gippsland 'keeper then pulled off a fabulous save after a perfect pass from Halpin found Boutsianis. His rocket volley was kept out by lightning quick reflexes - not many 'keepers in the world could have saved a strike like Boutsianis' but somehow Jevdjovic did.

Close to half time Gippsland had their only chance of the game when a freak corner had Naven scrambling to clear the ball off the line.

Somehow Gippsland made it to half time only one goal down. A one-sided performance not witnessed for a long time.



Gippsland did not have one shot on goal and only one corner in the first half.

Stange's side completely tore them apart but only had the one goal to show for their endeavour.

Gippsland came out in the second half full of fight. An encouraging run by Nilo came to an abrupt end when he was tackled in the area and received a yellow card for diving.

This was the first booking of the match which was a nice surprise at Perth Oval after the previous games which have been a booking bonanza.

Soon after Boutsianis had a penalty turned down after being pushed in the area.

An injured Miller came off to be subbed by Afkos after 63 minutes.

In the 70th minute Despotovski made way for Buljan whose arrival was greeted by a huge cheer. Despotovski's ego didn't handle the substitution - he showed his displeasure by kicking his chair as he sat down.

With the game reaching a lull the substitutes were starting to be the highlights. Gippsland made a double substitution in the 75th minute.

Adrian Savage (who was the centre of the wild scenes in the corresponding fixture last season) made way for the injured Hutchinson and Marcina was forced to make way for Katz.

Gippsland started forcing the home side back and made the way for a tense final 15 minutes. Gippsland captain Durakovic was booked for playing 'keep off' at a throw in - the ref not amused with the defender's action.

A blatant handball was then missed in the Glory area, the crowd not amused with the ref looking straight at it.

Boutsianis was then booked for an over zealous tackle, his temper getting the better of him as he tried to get back into the game.

Perth's one of only two chances in the second half came when Halpin tried to lob the keeper, his shot just going wide.

Apart from Halpin's missed opportunity

Trajkovski had a shot on goal which hit the crossbar. These were the only highlights of a poor second half.

Gippsland almost stole the game when Juan Nilo found space outrunning Thorp (who is almost double his size), his shot being saved by the keeper.

Glory's defence being saved the humiliation of letting in a late goal after all the great work of the midfield throughout the game.

Buljabasic came on for Edgar Jr in injury time but could do little as the referee ended the match after five minutes of injury time.

The win put Perth into second on goal difference. Bernd Stange said that "it was a hard victory, we were in a slump this time last season and were not winning games like today, we are getting the results eventually."

A disappointed Jeff Hopkins was unavailable for comment.

Halpin shone for the Glory, his poise and passing in the midfield was a pleasure to watch. Ergic had many runs at goal but



Peter Buljan finally made his debut after an injury interrupted season.

couldn't quite finish the job.

Naven was as usual rock solid at the back denying Nilo on many occasions while the small Gippsland player was a thorn in Glory's side but he had few team mates helping him.

Glory now travel to Sydney to face the Spirit full of confidence with no injuries and sitting in second spot. Gippsland are at home against Brisbane which should prove interesting.

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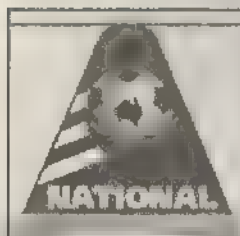
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Lucky Glory escape Belmore with a draw



SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1

Cardozo 74

PERTH GLORY 1

Boutsianis 33

Monday night at Belmore Oval, Sydney. Crowd 8,134

Round
14 game

MATCH STATS:



SYDNEY OLYMPIC:

Bouhoutsos, Zoricich, Baillie, Juric, Phillips, Cardozo, Emerton, Mendez (Sinozic 90), Wilson, Kohler (Kalantzis 46), Tome (Carle 74).



PERTH GLORY:

Petkovic, Trajanovski (Afkos 80), Miller, Naven, Harnwell, Junior, Halpin, Ergic, Edwards, Despotovski, Boutsianis (Buljubasic 88)

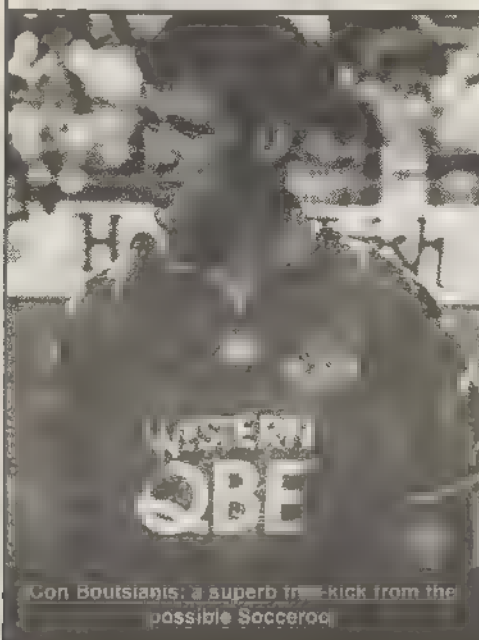
Yellow Cards:

Olympic: Emerton 67, Baillie 70.
Glory: Miller 21.

BEST PLAYERS:

3. MENDEZ (OLYMPIC)
2. Naven (Glory)
1. Emerton (Olympic)

Referee: Matthew Breeze



By Ben Cubby

Sydney Olympic and Perth Glory turned on a fast, skillful, sometimes scintillating display of football at Belmore Sportsground on Monday evening.

After falling behind to a fabulous Con Boutsianis free kick in the first half, Olympic rallied and equalised through Pablo Cardozo midway through the second.

Olympic attacked in waves for much of the match, and many observers felt that the West Aussies were lucky to escape from Sydney with a point.

Olympic's biggest crowd of the season rolled up to Belmore, tempted by the fine weather and the recent good form of the home side.

Cheap entry to the hill area of the ground meant that vocal supporters flanked both sides of the pitch, generating the sort of atmosphere that was rarely seen earlier in the season.

The league leaders kicked off without the injured Peter Tsekenis, Scott Thomas

and Zlatko Arambasic, but hardly seemed to miss them.

Youngster Paul Kohler made his first start at this level in place of Thomas and Norm Tome again partnered Cardozo in attack.

Perth lacked Socceroo Kasey Wehrman, but were otherwise at full strength for this encounter.

Cardozo gave a taste of things to come when he rattled a shot just wide in the second minute, after good lead-up work from Brett Emerton.

The busy Gabriel Mendez then embarked upon a scything run past three Glory defenders, but Edgar Junior managed to intervene at the last moment.

Olympic continued to surge out of the blocks with Cardozo and Tome coming close to a goal early on.

Perth's defensive trio of Junior, Gareth Naven and Jamie Harnwell weathered the storm, though, and the steadying influence of Troy Halpin in midfield allowed the team to play their way into the match.

George Bouhoutsos reacted quickly to claim Scott Baillie's weak back-header at the feet of Perth's Alistair Edwards in the 13th minute.

The burly custodian then had to stretch his large frame to reach a low, raking shot from Halpin.

Olympic were a coat of paint away from taking the lead in the 18th minute. Cardozo's curling free kick was tipped brilliantly onto the inside of the post by Petkovic, and the ball bounced harmlessly across the face of an open goal.

Another free kick, this time from Mendez, was deflected out to Phillips, whose low shot was fired just wide of the upright.

At the other end of the park, Boutsianis tried a set-piece and was thwarted by Bouhoutsos.

Olympic were fully exploiting the width of the pitch. Lyndsay Wilson tormented Robert Trajkovski, while Emerton and Kohler combined on the right to harass Scott Miller.

One of Emerton's outswinging crosses found Scott Baillie unmarked, but the

big defender scuffed his shot over the bar from six yards out.

Olympic had dominated up to this point, but Boutsianis' 33rd minute strike took the wind out of their sails.

The dead-ball specialist carefully picked his spot from 30 yards out and curled an unstoppable shot into the top right hand corner of the net.

It was a stunning goal; even some of the Olympic supporters rose to applaud his effort.

The frenetic pace eased somewhat after the goal and the Glory's Ivan Ergic took advantage of the lull to waltz through the Olympic defence. He lost control at the vital moment, though, and Bouhoutsos raced off his line to grab the ball.

Olympic coach Branko Culina sprung a tactical switch at half-time, replacing the impressive Kohler with Chris Kalantzis.

The veteran winger brought renewed urgency to the Olympic cause. He earned a free kick in the 46th minute, which Mendez whipped into the goalmouth.

Brett Emerton's angled header seemed goalbound for a second, but then glanced off the outside of the near post.

Kalantzis and Mendez engineered an opening for Emerton a few moments later, and the rampaging Olyroo captain again shaved the outside of the upright.



Another superb performance by the rejuvenated Chee Chee Mendez.

Marcus Phillips released Tome with a defence-splitting ball in the 55th. The little striker drew the 'keeper towards him and cut back for Cardozo, but the top-scorer couldn't quite make contact with his out-stretched leg.

Mendez and Phillips swarmed across the midfield, winning challenges and guarding possession. A stinging drive from Phillips flew inches over the bar in the 65th.

When they saw the ball, the Glory midfield also showed some artistry. A beautiful exchange of passes between Halpin and Boutsianis gave Trajkovski some space on the right.

The former Socceroo curled in a dipping cross and Despotovski saw his header beat Bouhoutsos but not the post.

In the 67th minute Emerton appeared to have been felled by Junior on the edge of the Perth box, only to receive a yellow card for diving from referee Matthew Breeze.

It looked to be a harsh decision, but within minutes it was forgotten as Olympic claimed their equaliser.

A neat interchange between Kalantzis and Cardozo punched a hole in the Glory defence and the striker made the most of a tight angle to blast the ball past Petkovic.

The stadium erupted, and straight from the re-start, Olympic went hunting for a winner.

Nick Carle arrived from the substitutes bench, bringing fresh impetus to the cause with his darting runs.

Perth seemed to wilt in the dying stages, doing just enough to hold on for the draw.

The six minutes of stoppage time added on by the referee saw the visitors camped within their own half, and sometimes within their own 18-yard box.

But survive they did, thanks to the tenacity of the back three and some poor finishing by the home side.

Olympic deserve credit for their attacking ethos, and Perth were equally impressive in defence.

This high quality contest was worthy of a finals match, and perhaps these two teams will meet again in that context at the end of the season?



Olyroo captain Brett Emerton, one of Olympic's form players

Rare Kingz home win continues Canberra's slide

FOOTBALL KINGZ 3
Silva 31, de Jong 49, Bunce 68

Round 14
fixture



CANBERRA COSMOS 1
Musitano 82

Monday afternoon at North Harbour Stadium, Auckland Crowd: 2,500

MATCH STATS:



KINGZ: Batty; Perry, Bunce, Jones, Vicelich; Middleby (Osman, 72), Ngata, Jackson, Mennillo (Elrick, 63); de Jong, Silva (Riddle 63)



CANBERRA: Konstantinou; Burt, Hooker (Gonzalez, 51), Purdue; James, Roberts (Musitano, 72), Hamilton, Polak, Popovich; Watkins, Kolpak

Yellows:

Kingz: H. Ngata (51), F. de Jong (79), C. Bunce (89)
Canberra: H. James (17), D. Burt (41), J. Polak (74)

Reds:

Kingz: L. Jones (73)

Best Players

3: MENNILLO (KINGZ)
2: Silva (Kingz)
1: Musitano (Canberra)

Referee: Mark Shield

combination dominated much of the play in this encounter against a Canberra side which has plummeted down the league ladder in recent weeks, having failed to score a single point since the last week in November.

Early on in the piece, the home side seemed intent on wrapping up the points inside the first ten minutes.

The lively Ivan Vicelich and the outstanding Dino Mennillo were, with the combined efforts of Canberra's defence and goalkeeper Angelo Konstantinou proving sufficient to thwart the former three times in this period, a phase of the match in which Fred de Jong also went close to breaking the deadlock.

The Kingz eased off the accelerator briefly, with Mennillo and Toplica Popovich the only players to trouble Konstantinou in the next twenty minutes, the latter diverting the cross of the energetic Aaron Silva back beyond the reach of the advancing goalkeeper. The 2500-strong crowd was treated to the comical sight of Konstantinou scampering back towards his goal in hot pursuit of the bouncing ball - embarrassment was avoided by a yard!!

After de Jong had squandered a guilt-edged chance in the 26th minute - he failed to hit the target when put clean through by the combined efforts of Chris Jackson and Silva - the Kingz opened the scoring with a simply conceived but superbly executed 31st minute strike.

Jason Batty's raking clearance was flicked on by Vicelich for the ever-menacing Mennillo. His driven low cross was steered home first-time by Silva, whose delight at scoring in just his second game after a lengthy absence was evident for all to see.

The advantage was no more than the Kingz deserved, and it was one they almost doubled right on the stroke of half-time. De Jong, who missed the Kingz trip to Carlton after collecting his fourth booking of the season, picked out Silva with a measured lay-off, and the effervescent striker scampered between Konstantinou and the retreating Robbie Hooker to create room for a shot, which thudded into the side-netting just a foot past the upright.

The Kingz dominance continued early in the second spell. After de Jong had been crowded out by the massed ranks of Canberra's defence, Harry Ngata sparked off a superb 48th minute raid with a fine crossfield pass to Robbie Middleby.

The flank player scorched past four opponents before playing a one-two with Mennillo, then setting up Silva. Only Konstantinou's fine save at full stretch prevented the Kingz from doubling their advantage.

The 'keeper was well placed to deny Jackson's vicious volley seconds later, but could do nothing to prevent the inevitable happening in the 49th minute. Vicelich released Silva with an early ball which the Chilean made the most of, arcing over a fine first-time cross which de Jong volleyed home in emphatic fashion,

despite the attentions of Cosmos defender Nick Purdue at his shoulder.

Silva and de Jong both went close after the hour, before the home side assured themselves of just their second win in six attempts at North Harbour Stadium with, at long last, a well-executed set-piece goal. Jackson picked out Che Bunce with his free-kick, and the ball duly found its way into the top corner of the net in the 68th minute, despite Konstantinou's best efforts to divert it elsewhere.

Aside from a Levent Osman effort late on which Konstantinou saved with his legs, that was the Kingz lot in a match in which the visitors rarely looked like breaking their losing streak.

Batty was largely untroubled for the majority of the encounter, Toplica Popovich the only person to force him to produce a save with his twenty yard strike in the 21st minute.

It was only following the 73rd minute dismissal of Kingz defender Lee Jones, for a reckless - and needless - lunge on Paul Roberts, that Batty and his defenders had to break sweat. And break sweat they did in the last ten or so minutes, as Canberra made their numerical superiority count.

Jonathan Perry didn't quite clean up a Cosmos raid, the pressure applied by Glen Kolpak forcing the Kingz defender to err. Kolpak quickly capitalised, back-heeling the ball into the path of Daniel Watkins, who swept the ball across for the completely unmarked Michael Musitano to pick his spot beyond Batty in the 82nd minute.

Four minutes later, the All Whites goalkeeper had to be at his best to thwart Musitano, a lively substitute who, in this writer's eyes, made the most of his opportunity to press for a starting place in a Canberra side clearly lacking in confidence throughout this duel.



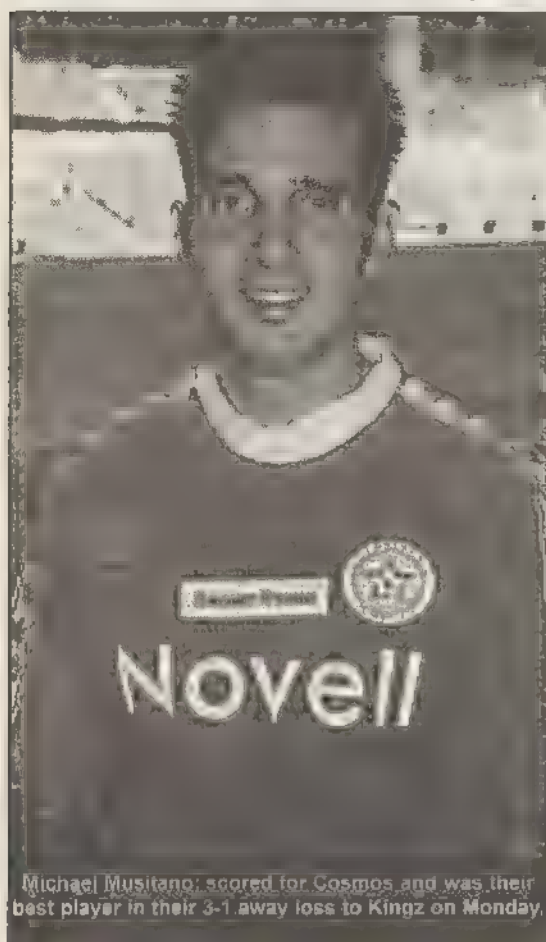
King Dino: Auckland's best player was Dino Mennillo

The striker bulldozed his way to the byline and looked to beat Batty at his near post with a tight-angled shot, but the Kingz custodian saved with his legs.

In stoppage time, the visitors came close to reducing the deficit still further, Watkins volleying against the far post on receipt of a cross from Harry James, who, having already earned a yellow card in the twelfth minute, was fortunate to remain on the park soon after, having executed a tackle from behind which sent Vicelich sprawling, but which only earned the offender a talking-to from the otherwise well-performed referee, Mark Shield.

In recent weeks, criticism of the performances of those match officials appointed to adjudicate games involving the Football Kingz has far outweighed any praise due to them.

Mr Shield's common-sense approach to the task is one his peers would do well to take note of.



Michael Musitano scored for Cosmos and was their best player in their 3-1 away loss to Kingz on Monday.

By Jeremy Ruane

The Football Kingz bounced back to winning ways at North Harbour Stadium on January 3, starting the new millennium as they mean to continue with a convincing 3-1 win over perennial National Soccer League cellar-dwellers Canberra Cosmos.

In recording just their second home win of the season, the victorious Kingz

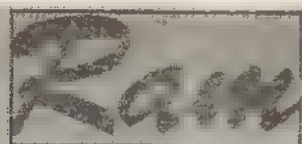


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INSIDE JUNIOR SOCCER



NORTHERN DIVISION

Sydney United 1 (Jermen 83')	Newcastle Colts 0	
New. Breakers 0	Sydney Olympic Doumanis 89' pen	1
Syd. United Colts 1 Gardiner 7'	A.C.T.A.S. Kemp 83'	1
Northern Spirit 6 Wearne 8', Kane 10', Lo Proto 49' Kathel 46' R Griffiths 63' Olic 70' pen MacRae 85'	Sydney United	1
Q.A.S. 6 McKain 22', Stevens 43 Drake 48', 84' pen Walsh 54', Miner 80'	Syd. Olym Academy Tirovski 3' Sarmonikas 44	2
Nort. Spirit Colt 0	Marconi Colts 2 Peros 67', Screpis 70'	
Newcastle Colts 1 Wheeler 38' pen	Wollongong Wolves Lahanas 2'	1
Marconi Stallions 5 Z Babic 13', 25', 85' M Babic 20', Karl 73'	Parramatta Power Thompson 17 Dixon 40'	2

A.I.S. v Wollongong Wolves Colts
(Sunday 19 March 2000)

Bye - N.S.W.I.S.

NORTHERN DIVISION

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
Sydney Olympic	13	10	3	1	0	38	8	33
Parramatta Power	14	10	2	1	2	37	12	32
Q.A.S.	16	10	1	1	5	47	25	31
A.I.S.	13	9	2	1	2	51	14	29
Northern Spirit	13	8	2	1	3	32	18	26
Newcastle Breakers	15	9	1	0	5	27	17	25
Marconi Stallions	13	8	0	1	5	24	21	24
A.C.T.A.S.	14	5	5	1	4	23	28	20
Sydney United	12	6	1	1	5	20	24	19
N.S.W.I.S.	13	5	3	2	5	23	15	18
Olympic Academy	14	5	0	1	9	31	53	15
Newcastle Colts	16	4	2	1	10	19	32	14
Marconi Colts	14	3	4	1	7	23	33	13
Wollongong Wolves	13	3	2	1	8	13	27	11
Northern Spirit Colts	13	3	2	1	8	14	32	11
Sydney United Colts	15	2	3	0	10	14	37	9
Wollongong Colts	11	0	1	1	10	7	47	1

SOUTHERN DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carlton	8	8	0	0	37	3	24
VIS	8	8	0	0	27	2	24
Bulleen InterKings	8	6	1	1	22	11	19
Melbourne Knights	9	3	2	4	26	21	11
South Dandenong	8	3	2	3	12	12	11
Gippsland Falcons	7	3	2	2	10	15	11
South Melbourne	7	3	0	4	18	10	9
Fawkner Blues	8	2	2	4	10	20	8
Albury Wodonga	9	1	2	6	13	32	5
Knights Academy	7	1	0	6	3	11	3
Preston Lions	9	0	1	8	7	48	1



Chris Conti reports that Sydney United Colts and the ACT Academy of Sport battled for a draw on a warm afternoon at Edensor Park, with the ACTAS probably feeling more disappointed at not claiming full points than the United Colts.

However, the home team began the stronger and had an excellent chance to take the lead in the first minute when some hesitant ACTAS marking at the back allowed Sydney striker, Josip Bastic a one-on-one with keeper Doug Hynson. To Hynson's relief Bastic chipped the ball over the bar.

Two minutes later ACTAS' Daniel Aliffi recovered the ball from a punch by the Sydney keeper, Ben Xerri, but shot just wide.

In the seventh minute the ACTAS were punished for ball-watching again; from a free kick on the left a good cross was curled in, and while the defenders and keeper waited for the ball, the Sydney United wing back, Dave Gardiner, nipped in and headed the ball past the stranded Hynson.

Apart from an excellent move involving Aliffi and Goran Veljanovski which ended with ACTAS midfielder, Yosef Zamora, shooting just over the Sydney goal, very little else of interest occurred and the teams went to the interval with a 1-0 score line to Sydney United, and unaware of the drama which was to unfold in the second half.

With the second half only eight minutes old, Sydney United were reduced to ten men.

ACTAS' Carl Valeri was fowled on the edge of the United penalty area by Tim Falzon, who then, under the eyes of the referee inexplicably grabbed Valeri by the throat.

Referee, Alan Sutton, really had no alternative but to send Falzon off for violent conduct, and for the next twenty minutes the ACTAS laid siege to the United goal - Valeri, Veljanovski and the introduced Paul Ivanic all had good opportunities to equalise but Xerri and the markers in front of him, Micheal Cindric, Daniel Willoughby and Stipe Susic, marshalled the Sydney defence very well to keep ACTAS at bay, and in fact.

Sydney United had an opportunity to increase their lead in the 74th minute. Sutton gave an indirect free kick for obstruction ten yards from the ACTAS goal line and centre back, Phil Yarnold dissented the decision so vigorously that he was sent from the field for continuing to give dissent.

As it was the ACTAS defence smothered the resultant free kick.

With only seven minutes to go, Sydney United conceded a free kick on the edge of their area, and Stephen Kemp calmly smashed the kick into the top corner giving Xerri no chance.

In the remaining last minutes ACTAS had a number of opportunities to grab the winner and looked to have won it when Ivanic beat Xerri to a through ball and lobbed towards the empty net, but the first person to the ball was a Sydney defender rather than an ACTAS attacker.

From the corner Valeri had a chance blocked and Aliffi and Alvaro Guzman later put headers just over, to leave the final score as 1-1.

Sydney United Colts: Ben Xerri, Dave Gardiner, Daniel Willoughby, Micheal Cindric, Stipe Susic, Tim Falzon, Milan Bosnar (Antony Mrdjan 45min), John Turco (Marco Bazdaric 77min), Agyei Akwari (Matthew Clowes 64 min), Denni Ristevski, Josip Bastic. Subs not used: Tomislav Baric, Josip Grgic.

ACTAS: Doug Hynson, Dom La Butte, Amied Shadmaan (Ian Waldon 73 min), Phil Yarnold, Luke Morgan, Stephen Kemp (capt), Adam Williams (Alvaro Guzman 60 min), Yosef Zamora, Daniel Aliffi, Goran Veljanovski (Paul Ivanic 58 min), Carl Valeri. Subs not used: Matt Anstey, Adrien La Butte.

Theo Katsaros reports that in a deferred match from Round 13, the Newcastle Breakers Colts travelled to Sydney but went home disappointed after conceding a late goal against Sydney United. Mario Jermen scored the winner in the 83rd minute.

The Newcastle Breakers hosted Sydney Olympic on a wet Friday night at Breakers Stadium and suffered the same fate as their Colts team two nights previously. An 89th minute penalty scored by talented Joey, Anthony Doumanis (pictured above - see next week's issue of Inside Soccer) gave Olympic the three points and first place on the league ladder.

Four matches were played on Saturday despite the constant threat of rain in Sydney.

Sydney United were thumped six goals to nil by a rampant Northern Spirit outfit at Christie Park. After leading two-nil at the break, the Spirit massacred their depleted opponents in the second half.

Paul Wearne, Derryk Kane, Ross Kathel, Ryan Griffiths, Elvis Olic, from the penalty spot, and Todd MacRae, recorded singles.

Alan Lo Proto replied for Sydney United as he continues his march up the leading goalscorers chart. He now has nine goals for the season.

Also at Christie Park, two goals in three minutes sealed a two-nil victory for the Marconi Stallions Colts over the Northern Spirit Colts.

The deadlock wasn't broken until the 67th minute when John Peros found the back of the net. Before the Spirit could recover from

this setback the Stallions struck again courtesy of a Chris Screpis strike after 70 minutes.

Going into the break all square the Sydney Olympic Academy must have been confident of leaving Metway Suncorp Stadium with at least a point but a four goal second half by the Q.A.S. ended any thoughts of this.

In their two matches this season the teams have produced a total of 18 goals. However, the bad news for the Olympians is that the Q.A.S. have scored 14 of those.

Sash Tirovski opened the scoring in the 3rd minute for the visitors but Jonathon McKain levelled the scores in the 22nd minute. It wasn't until the 43rd minute that a Ben Stevens strike put the Q.A.S. into the lead. Before the celebrations had ended, an Anthony Sarmonikas penalty restored the equilibrium.

The hosts scored twice within ten minutes of the restart courtesy of goals by Lawrence Drake and Sean Walsh.

Two further goals in the last ten minutes ended the match as a contest. Russell Miner grabbing his 13th of the season and Drake bagging his second for the match. The six-two result elevates the Q.A.S. to third spot in the league.

The Newcastle Breakers Colts hosted the Wollongong Wolves at Breakers Stadium on Sunday afternoon.

The Wolves have struggled this season and despite leading after just two minutes, they could not go on with it and had to settle for a one-all draw.

The scorer for the Wolves was Peter Lahanas who hasn't been able to command a regular first team spot since his arrival from Greece.

A penalty in the 38th minute gave the Breakers the opportunity to level the scores, which Paul Wheeler kindly accepted.

A match involving several National Soccer League stars kept the supporters at Marconi Stadium entertained with Zeljko Babic (pictured above) bagging a hat-trick.

The Marconi Stallions and Parramatta Power were strengthened with the inclusion of the players after the NSL fixture was postponed due to the Four Nation tournament involving the Olyroos in Adelaide.

For the Stallions, Mark and Zeljko Babic, Dominic Longo and Harry Karl added experience to a young and enthusiastic team whilst the Power used the services of Richard Plesa, Walter Ardone and Lachlan Campbell.

Making his return after suspension, Babic showed he has lost nothing during his stint on the sidelines with goals in the 13th, 25th and 85th minutes.

Mark Babic also found the net after 20 minutes as did Harry Karl after 73 minutes for the Stallions.

Matthew Thompson scored for the Power in the 17th minute and Scott Dixon netted in the 40th minute.

The five goals to two win by the Stallions sees the Power drop to second place on the league ladder after two months on top.

S-news

AUSTRALIAN
SOCCER'S NEWS
AND GOSS

THE KING'Z RETURN?

Don't be surprised to see the return of one of Football Kingz' Aussies in the not too distant future. Seems all is not well with certain things over there for this player. If he does come back, one of Sydney's biggest clubs is the most likely destination for this talented Aussie. And two former Newcastle lads could be tempted to return home by the resurgent Breakers next year?

HOPE YOU'RE

FEELING BETTER

That's our message to Ante Milicic, the former Sydney United striker who left Australia in 1997 for a career in Holland's league. He was home recently and had to spend a short time in hospital. Fortunately it was nothing serious. Milicic is currently with Rijeka in the Croatian First Division.

A MADE-FOR-TV NOGGIN HAS HARPS

Just a brief 'we're not worthy' to SBS-TV, for covering the whole Brazil extravaganza, writes Greg Blake. And yet another wrap for the sagely Andrew Harper, who is an absolute natural for the box. I reckon 'Harps' was past his shelf use-by date as a decent player two years ago (although Newcastle boss Lee Sterrey might argue the point) but that made-for-TV noggin will be around footy in some capacity in the media for many, many years to come.

BROTHER SISTER

Speaking of the WCC, it was a huge weekend in the life of the Alagich family. Son Richie plays in the WCC and Diane represents Australia against Sweden. Mum and Dad would have been proud.

SEX SELLS

Was the screaming tabloid headline IS ran a few weeks ago in a pathetic attempt to grab your attention. Well it did! The competition to win an autographed Amy Taylor poster (winner in this issue) was so popular it had four times as many entries as the Robbie Slater and Sir Alex Ferguson competitions. Guess Freud was right.

HERE'S A TIP

If you want to hold a private, informal soccer-related chat away from the prying and voracious (!) soccer print media - like one high profile NSL coach and one of Australia's biggest stars of the Olyroos recently - try not to have it at City Extra in Parramatta. S-news' offices are three doors down. You could say we are regulars at this wonderful cafe with a wide range of delicious items on their competitively priced menu open 24 hrs (reader: can you spell cash for comment?) You've been warned, then again you know where we are if you want a chat.

POWER HOSTS FREE SCHOOL HOLIDAY CLINIC

Tuesday 18 January is the date for this kids' clinic. It begins at 10.30am at Ted Horwood Reserve, Renown Rd Baulkham Hills (entry to car park is opposite the

Baulkham Hills Sporting Club. Power's office has more details (9630 9777.). Oh, and the kids also are given free posters and tickets to the Power game v Falcons on the Saturday night Jan 22. Power will play their following home game against Northern Spirit also on a Saturday, Jan 29. Kick off for both is 7.30pm with the Youth games played prior.

SUSA GETS HIS OLYROO CHANCE

As you would know now, former South Midfielder Bill Damianos' club Xanthi claimed he could not leave Greece to join the Olyroos in Adelaide 'and will be conscripted into the army should he do so'. So how does that work?? Nick Tolios could perhaps take this sad little episode into account. Recently in S-news we told you about this young Carlton lad who organized his own trial with Aston Villa. Following that he went to AEK Athens where he was received warmly, so warmly that the Greek U/21s have expressed an interest in the talented defender's services. Naturally those who were part of his development in Melbourne have been very keen to dissuade him, even letting SA Technical Director Les Scheinflug know the situation. Beware Greeks bearing gifts?

AGENOR MUNIZ

Is one former Socceroo who knew exactly what South were going through when they played Vasco in front of those heaving thousands of fans at the Maracana. Muniz - one of our most skillful Socceroos - played for six years at Vasco and had the pleasure of playing at the Maracana "ten or more times". Muniz was proud of the way South played.

GIRLS' FANS GET THE SPIRIT

The talking point in the corporate boxes at Spirit last Friday was the crowd. At the Matildas' kick-off there was about 5,000, which swelled to about 6,000 half an hour in. The final crowd was posted as just under 12,000. As one corporate box joker said to Arnie before the game, "there are more here for the girls than you!" Fortunately for Arnie's Spirit, the way his side played should bring the fans back. Coast FM in Adelaide will broadcast this Thursday's Matildas v US game at Hindmarsh.

THE HOTTEST TAPE IN TOWN

Don't you just hate those media conferences when the coaches and players say nothing at all interesting. One post-match press conference last weekend was however somewhat lively to say the least. Put it this way, the visiting coach did not take kindly to the line of questioning and the local journo's present gave as good as they got. There were accusations, denials, mud-slinging and credibility questioned. S-news has read the transcripts of the tape of the conference and it makes for an interesting read!

WINNER OF AMY TAYLOR POSTER COMPETITION



The winner is:

Andrew Rogers of Harboard in NSW

The poster will be sent this week.

WIN A FREE SOCCER CD BY LUST IN SPACE



This fantastic CD by the band Lust in Space is out now and it has already received airplay on Melbourne and national radio. The Carlton track is called 'A Dream won't do' and it has a brilliant Oasis sound to it. For your chance to win this CD cut out and send this ad to Inside Soccer at PO BOX 3889 PARRAMATTA NSW 2124. You can enter as many times as you like, the more entries the more chance you have of winning (photocopies not accepted). The first correct answer drawn on January 31, 2000 will win: winner announced in the Feb 1 issue.

QUESTION: WHICH CARLTON PLAYER WAS ONCE A TEAMMATE WITH RONALDO?

Answer: _____

NAME:

ADDRESS:

NEXT WEEK IN IS

King Ivan Vicelich
Super Mario Jerman (right)
Anthony Doumanis
from Sydney Olympic
Tony Popovich and all the Aussie news



KEWELL AND LEEDS THRASH MAN CITY

Leeds produced a Premiership masterclass of attacking football to book their place in the last 16 of the FA Cup, but only after Manchester City had threatened to paint a different picture.

In the end, Leeds' pedigree - particularly during a pulsating first half - allowed them to cut Royle's brave side to ribbons and end a disappointing two-match losing run.

United's dazzling young guns had too much skill for the Blues, and but for keeper Nicky Weaver, Royle could have been witness to a landslide.

The City boss, however, can be proud of his players for a flying start to the match as a clearly offside Shaun Goater exposing a surprisingly static Leeds defence after just 118 seconds, leading to a rendition of City's theme song 'Blue Moon'.

But United's response was one you would expect from the Premier League leaders, hitting back in the ninth minute when Ian Harte powered a 14-yard header goalwards and Eirik Bakke who managed to get the decisive touch.

Then City regained the lead with a wonderful strike as Ian Bishop dispossessed McPhail and after taking a stride to gain position, the central midfielder curled a cracking shot round Nigel Martyn with the outside of his right foot.

Weaver could do nothing about United's 23rd minute equaliser as McPhail was again the supplier, this time with a corner, for another Harte header which was blocked on the line by Bishop.

From the ricochet, Alan Smith was on hand to poach only his fourth goal of the season.

Leeds finally took the lead two minutes from the break as Lee Bowyer spread the ball out wide to Jason Wilcox for the winger to drill in a drive through the six-yard box where Kewell was on hand to tap home at the far post.

The game-killing fourth for Leeds was clinical as Wilcox treated Bowyer to a perfect delivery for the midfielder to roof a first-time left-foot shot for his ninth of the season in the 65th minute.

It was Kewell who then drove the final knife into City, tapping home an 88th minute pass from Darren Huckerby, a substitute moments earlier who had powered down the left wing and cut in as the home defence was cruelly exposed again.

After the victory, man-of-the-match Kewell said: "It's always good to come back when you are a goal down and we did it twice but I knew the team was up for it today and we were not going to lose."

"I nearly got a hat-trick but the team did very well and the players who were out there played superbly as a team."

Even the belated introduction of Kanu failed to ignite the only goalless draw of the FA Cup fourth round as Leicester manned the barricades to earn a replay against Arsenal at Highbury.

Martin O'Neill's side even had to cope with only 10 men for the final eight minutes after referee Mike Riley, who made more of an impact on the game than any of the players, controversially sent off Darren Eadie.

It was a highly debatable decision by Riley, who took some time to realise he had previously shown the winger the yellow card for a foul on Fredrik Ljungberg.

The second 'offence' was apparently for time-wasting by running off with the ball even though Patrick Vieira had impeded Eadie, yet that was just one of 10 yellow cards shown in what was hardly a tempestuous encounter.

Indeed, the irony was that after all of the frantic lobbying for Kanu to be released by Nigeria to play in this game, with only the intervention of the Nigerian High Commission in London proving decisive, the striker was promptly named as a substitute.

Sunderland could be handed an FA Cup lifeline after suffering a controversial

fourth-round defeat at Tranmere.

And boss Peter Reid admitted the club will speak to the Football Association about the 1-0 result.

With Wayne Allison's goal separating the two sides, Rovers defender Clint Hill was dismissed by referee Rob Harris late in the match.

But the First Division side appeared to put substitute Stephen Frail on the field as a replacement.

Eventually, after a touchline dispute involving Reid, Andy Parkinson came off.

Reid was incensed with the incident and let his feelings be known on the touchline.

The Football Association moved quickly to deal with the row and the FA Challenge Cup committee met on Monday to discuss the incident.

The match assessor faxed the authority with details of the incident, leaving Tranmere sweating on the outcome.

Reid was reluctant to discuss the incident in detail but admitted that he felt aggrieved after the loss.

"There has been a breach of rules and we'll see what the FA say about it," he told Sky Sports.

"They (Tranmere) had too many players on the pitch. I'll have a chat with the referee about it."

He later added: "It was against the rules. They should have had 10 on and they had 11 on."

"The best person to ask is Mr Harris. It will be interesting."

Referee Harris refused to comment but did agree to meet Reid after the game.

Rovers secretary Mick Horton read out a statement which said: "Mr Harris, today's match referee, regrets that he will not be making any statement this evening."

"A fax has already been sent to the Football Association for their consideration and they will make a press release when it is appropriate to do so."

Meanwhile, Tranmere manager John Aldridge blamed the fourth official for the error.

But although he admitted that Rovers did have 11 men on the field when they shouldn't have, the club were not in the wrong.

Aldridge said: "The fourth official got mixed up. Frail went on when Clint came off and he didn't wait for Andy (Parkinson) to come off."

"So that is basically what happened. We took the free-kick and we had 11 men on the pitch."

"But we have done everything right so there is no problem."

Aldridge added the dismissal of Hill marred another day of cup joy for the First Division side.

Aldridge said: "It took a bit of a tinge away from the victory."

"It was a very competitive match. We fought all the way and we rode our luck one or two times but fortune favoured the brave, as they say."

Wimbledon were another top-flight casualty as First Division Fulham produced the result of the day. Barry Hayles produced a cross for Wayne Collins to net after 22 minutes and Steve Finnan doubled the lead three minutes later, then Collins grabbed his second on 77 minutes.

Everton, with a record 23 semi-final appearances, dominated injury-hit Birmingham but had to make do with a couple of penalties to secure a 2-0 victory.

Spot-kicks in the 75th and 90th minutes by David Unsworth sealed a place in the next round.

Coventry were under early pressure from Burnley, who ousted Derby in the previous round but Youssef Chippo's 11th minute goal settled nerves and Chippo netted again after 69 minutes. Substitute Noel Whelan put the match out of Burnley's reach.

Newcastle got off to a flier against Sheffield United with Alan Shearer notching his 19th in the fifth minute. But Martin Smith pulled the Blades level only for



Harry Kewell and Alan Smith celebrate a Leeds goal.

hopes to fade as Nikos Dabizas restored the lead two minutes after the break. It was the goal that broke the back of Sheffield's injury-hit side and Duncan Ferguson and Kevin Gallacher made it safe.

Premiership bottom club Sheffield Wednesday thought their luck had changed when Niclas Alexandersson put them in front against Wolves after nine minutes.

But Steve Sedgley was credited with a controversial equaliser after 68 minutes, Wednesday claiming the ball had not crossed the line.

Gareth Southgate, who netted twice against Leeds last week, again got a crucial goal when he notched the winner in the 20th minute against Southampton in the only all-Premiership clash of the day.

Charlton's Charlie MacDonald was the darling of The Valley with the goal on his debut that gave Charlton a 1-0 victory over QPR.

Second division Gillingham reached the fourth round for the first time in 15 years and earned a trip to Bradford thanks to Andy Thomson's extra time goal which put paid to First Division Walsall.

An own goal by Tony Barras after 33 minutes gave the Gills the lead but Bjarni Larusson equalised with a 30 yarder a minute before the break, his first goal for the Saddlers. Thomson wrapped up the tie in the 100th minute.

In the Nationwide Division One Craig Hignett equalised two minutes from time to earn battling Barnsley a deserved point from the First Division clash with Norwich at Carrow Road.

The visitors trailed 2-0 early in the second half but came storming back, with substitute Bruce Dyer's 58th-minute strike giving them renewed hope before Hignett's 13th goal of the season completed the comeback.

Norwich looked on course for a victory that would have lifted them into the play-off zone as striker Iwan Roberts struck twice to take his season's tally to 13.

He took only three minutes to break the deadlock, latching on to a flick from an Eric Fuglestad corner to prod the ball home from close range.

And it got even better for City and Roberts five minutes into the second half when the burly centre forward got on the end of Darel Russell's lofted cross from the right to send a powerful header past goalkeeper Kevin Miller.

Afterwards the draw was no more than they deserved, according to manager Dave Bassett.

Bassett said: "After winning four on

the trot it was important to keep the run going, and it's especially pleasing to have got a point after finding ourselves 2-0 down just after half-time.

"The players showed good resilience, kept battling away and in the end they got what they deserved."

In the Nationwide Division Two Lomano Lua-Lua scored a minute from time as Colchester hit back from 3-1 down to beat Bristol Rovers 5-4 in a thrilling Second Division encounter at Layer Road.

Jason Roberts took his season's tally to 18 with goals in the 12th and 46th minutes and although Steve McGavin pulled one back, third-placed Rovers went further in front through a Jamie Cureton penalty in the 59th minute.

Colchester scored three times in four minutes through McGavin's second and two from Karl Duguid to move 4-3 up.

Cureton then missed another penalty for Rovers and although Nathan Ellington did make it 4-4, Lua-Lua stole the points just before the end.

Elsewhere fourth-placed Millwall missed a chance to move closer to the leaders as they had to settle for a 1-1 draw at home to Wycombe.

Sean Devine gave Wanderers the lead in the 13th minute with his 18th goal of the season.

And although the Lions were glad of a Neil Harris leveller just before the break, they could not take advantage when Wycombe's Jason Cousins was sent off for a second bookable offence.

Mark Stein's 10th goal of the campaign put Bournemouth in front two minutes into the second half at home to Notts County but Gary Owers salvaged a 1-1 draw in the 70th minute.

Chesterfield ended a run of 23 games without a win when David Reeves' last-gasp effort gave them a 1-0 home victory over fading Brentford and lifted them off the foot of the table.

Kyle Lightbourne produced the 87th-minute winner for Stoke in a 2-1 win over Luton, who had Matthew Taylor sent off.

Paul Connor gave City the lead after 24 minutes before Matthew Spring equalised from the penalty spot after an hour.

Reading came from behind to earn a 1-1 draw with fellow strugglers Blackpool, who had new manager Steve McMahon in charge for the first time.

Robert Matthews put the Seasiders in front but then had Barry Shuttleworth sent off for violent conduct and Dean Caskey's 66th-minute effort earned a share of the points.

OLD FIRM IN BREAKAWAY TALKS



Craig Moore... will he be playing in a breakaway league?

The Old Firm will be called to a crunch summit meeting within the next two months to discuss the Dutch-inspired plot for 16 top northern European clubs to resign from their own leagues and establish a lucrative new championship.

Rangers and Celtic have been reluctant to contemplate breaking away from the SPL and become part of the much-wanted North Atlantic League set up.

But the pressure is about to increase for the thorny matter to be discussed before the end of the season as several clubs are keen to introduce the tourna-

ment by 2002.

PSV Eindhoven president Harry van Raaij, in his New Year speech on Thursday, announced his team's intention to leave the Dutch First Division and help create an innovative league for major clubs that operate outwith the 'Big Five' - Italy, Spain, Germany, France and England.

And PSV's manager Frank Arnesen confirmed that the Old Firm will be asked to attend a special meeting of all potential participants, where they will discuss whether clubs will need to resign from their national leagues in order to join - setting Rangers and Celtic a real poser.

He said: "We'll be in touch with Scottish clubs because, of course, we want them to join. We are prepared to resign from the Dutch League but we must find out what other clubs want to do."

"A true European league will never happen because the big five are happy with their TV money and everything else."

"So what we want to establish is the sixth league in Europe, made up of teams from Holland, Denmark, Portugal and elsewhere."

"It is the only way for small countries to keep up with the results of the big teams in the Champions League. They are so far ahead because of the money stream from TV."

"What we can do is make our market bigger and more interesting for TV and we can do that by combining these domestic leagues into a fresh set up."

Other candidate clubs for the proposed league are Danish side Brondby, Norwegians Rosenborg, Belgian sides Club Brugge and Anderlecht, Portugal's Porto and Benfica, plus Panathinaikos of Greece.

"It is very likely that a number of Germany's Bundesliga clubs will join this league, too," added Van Raaij. "This European league is no longer a pipe dream. It is reality."

"Financial powers now rule over legal structures. Football federations will not be able to keep the clubs in domestic leagues in Scotland, Belgium or Denmark."

"The clubs have no future at national level."

"All major clubs in Europe have become major companies and are developing according to the laws of economics. No one can stop that."

Van Raaij has been conducting talks with the Glasgow clubs, as well as other interested parties, over the past two years.

He intends to press ahead with his blueprint outside the authority of UEFA and FIFA. Jan Timmer, who recently resigned as president-director of electronics giant Philips, to become chief executive of the company's 'works team', PSV Eindhoven, said: "UEFA and FIFA are going to collapse under the pressure of the clubs."

"It will not be possible for them to keep the system going that Europe has had over the last 40 years."

The major Dutch clubs recognise

that, in financial terms, they are falling behind their rivals in England and Italy. Van Raaij added: "The exposure of this new league will be similar to the English Premier League and Italy's Serie A."

Van Raaij's vision includes a play-off series at the end of the mini-league campaigns to decide the true champions of Europe. "There will be eight European leagues," he said. "The English Premiership, Serie A in Italy and the Spanish League will stay independent."

"We will have five new leagues set up to combine, for instance, clubs from Holland and Scotland with Denmark. France with Switzerland and a northern Scandinavian section featuring the Swedes, Finns and Norwegians."

"Via a play-off system, the top clubs from each league will eventually decide the League champions of Europe. The Champions League will not be attacked by this new set-up. It will still be seen as the cup tournament of Europe."

Van Raaij strongly attacked the power of FIFA and UEFA. "They organise world and European tournaments and enjoy enormous income from ticket sales, television revenue and sponsorship. But the clubs have to supply their players for free and during those major tournaments we have to keep paying astronomical wages."

"This unbearable situation will no longer be tolerated by us."

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Leeds	21	14	2	5	35	24	44	11
Man Utd	19	13	4	2	50	25	43	25
Arsenal	21	12	4	5	37	21	40	16
Sunderland	21	11	5	5	35	25	38	10
Liverpool	21	11	4	6	31	18	37	13
Tottenham	20	10	4	6	32	23	34	9
Chelsea	20	9	5	6	29	21	32	8
Leicester	21	9	3	9	30	30	30	0
Everton	21	7	8	6	35	30	29	5
Aston Villa	21	8	5	8	21	22	29	-1
West Ham	20	7	7	6	24	23	28	1
Middlesbrough	19	8	3	8	23	26	27	-3
Coventry	20	6	7	7	28	24	25	4
Wimbledon	21	5	10	6	32	35	25	-3
Newcastle	21	6	6	9	34	37	24	-3
Southampton	20	5	5	10	24	32	20	-8
Derby	21	5	4	12	19	32	19	-13
Bradford	21	4	6	11	16	31	18	-15
Watford	21	4	2	15	17	44	14	-27
Sheff Wed	20	2	4	14	17	46	10	-29

ENGLISH DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Man City	26	16	4	6	40	21	52	19
Charlton	25	15	5	5	45	26	50	19
Ipswich	26	14	7	5	43	27	49	16
Barnsley	26	15	4	7	52	38	49	14
Huddersfield	26	14	5	7	44	27	47	17
Stockport	26	11	7	8	32	35	40	-3
QPR	26	10	9	7	35	30	39	5
Fulham	26	9	12	5	25	20	39	5
Norwich	26	10	8	8	27	25	38	2
Blackburn	25	9	10	6	32	25	37	7
Wolverhampton	25	9	9	7	29	25	36	4
Birmingham	25	9	8	8	34	28	35	6
Tranmere	26	10	5	11	37	37	35	0
Bolton	25	8	8	9	33	30	32	3
Crystal Palace	26	8	8	10	36	41	32	-5
Sheff Utd	26	8	7	11	33	41	31	-8
Nottm Forest	26	7	7	12	26	32	28	-6
Crewe	26	7	7	12	25	33	28	-8
West Brom	26	5	12	9	24	32	27	-8
Grimsby	26	7	6	13	27	45	27	-18
Port Vale	25	5	8	12	28	36	23	-8
Portsmouth	26	5	8	13	28	41	23	-13
Walsall	26	5	7	14	26	42	22	-16
Swindon	26	3	9	14	18	42	18	-24

ENGLISH DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Wigan	25	15	9	1	47	21	54	26
Preston	24	15	7	2	42	19	52	23

Bristol Rovers	25	15	5	5	36	20	50	16
Millwall	26	13	8	5	41	28	47	13
Stoke	25	12	8	5	36	22	44	14
Burnley	24	12	7	5	33	21	43	12
Notts County	26	12	7	7	38	27	43	11
Gillingham	23	12	6	5	42	28	42	14
Brentford	26	10	7	9	36	34	37	2
Bournemouth	26	10	5	11	36	37	35	-1
Wycombe	25	8	9	8	31	31	33	0
Luton	25	9	6	10	31	34	33	-3
Bury	23	7	10	6	37	31	31	6
Oldham	25	8	7	10	26	29	31	-3
Bristol City	25	6	12	7	28	29	30	-1
Colchester	25	6	7	12	32	51	25	-19
Cardiff	25	5	9	11	24	34	24	-10
Oxford Utd	24	6	6	12	23	33	24	-10
Scunthorpe	24	6	6	12	24	40	24	-16
Wrexham	24	4	10	10	21	36	22	-15
Reading	24	4	9	11	28	43	21	-15
Blackpool	25	3	9	13	24	43	18	-19
Chesterfield	24	3	8	13	14	28	17	-14
Cambridge Utd	24	3	7	14	30	41	16	-11

ENGLISH DIVISION THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Swansea	26	15	5	6	29	17	50	12
Barnet	26	14	7	5	37	26	49	11
Rotherham	26	14	5	7	39	19	47	20
Darlington	25	13	7	5	34	17	46	17
Hartlepool	26	13	3	10	36	28	42	8
Northampton	26	12	6	8	31	24	42	7
Halifax	26	12	5	9	30	27	41	3
Torquay	25	11	6	8	35	29	39	6
Rochdale	25	11	6	8	25	19	39	6
Macclesfield	26	11	6	9	38	35	39	3
Plymouth	24	10	8	6	33	27	38	6
Peterborough	24	11	5	8	35	34	38	1
Cheltenham	25	10	5	10	25	24	35	1
Brighton	25	9	7	9	38	31	34	7
Southend	26	9	6	11	34	38	33	-4
Mansfield	24	9	5	10	32	35	32	-3
Hull	25	8	7	10	24	25	31	-1
Lincoln City	24	8	7	9	35	37	31	-2
Exeter	25	7	5	13	29	39	26	-10
York	24	6	7	11	22	32	25	-10
Shrewsbury	26	6	5	15	23	41	23	-18
Carlisle	26	5	7	14	26	44	22	-18
Leyton Orient	25	5	6	14	22	34	21	-12
Chester	26	4	4	18	23	53	16	-30

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Rangers	17	14	2	1	45	14	44	31
Celtic	18	13	1	4	53	16	40	37
Dundee Utd	19	9	3	7	25	29	30	-4
Motherwell	17	7	6	4	28	30	27	-2
Hibernian	20	6	7	7	32	35	25	-3
Hearts	18	5	5	8	26	28	20	-2
St Johnstone	18	5	5	8	18	23	20	-5
Dundee	17	6	1	10	21	28	19	-7
Kilmarnock	18	2	7	9	18	28	13	-10
Aberdeen	18	3	3	12	20	55	12	-35

SCOTTISH DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
St Mirren	21	14	5	2	51	24	47	27
Dunfermline	21	11	7	3	37	20	40	17
Falkirk	22	11	4	7	39	31	37	8
Livingston	21	10	6	5	37	28	36	9
Raith	20	10	5	5	38	27	35	11
Inverness CT	22	7	7	8	35	34	28	1
Ayr	22	7	5	10	26	30	26	-4
Airdrie	22	5	6	11	17	39	21	-22
Greenock Morton	22	5	5	12	30	42	20	-12
Clydebank	21	0	4	17	13	48	4	-35

SCOTTISH DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Clyde	19	9	6	4	26	15	33	11
Alloa	19	7	10	2	24	19	31	5
Stranraer	20	6	10	4	28	21	28	7
Ross County	17	8	4	5	19	15	28	4
Arbroath	20	7	7	6	30	30	28	0
Stirling	20	7	4	9	38	35	25	3
Stenhousemuir	19	7	4	8	24	24	25	0
Partick	20	6	6	8	17	21	24	-4
Hamilton	19	4	7	8	20	27	19	-7
Queen of South	19	4	4	11	21	40	16	-19

SCOTTISH DIVISION THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Queen's Park	20	11	4	5	32	24	37	8
East Fife	18	10	2	6	23	20	32	3
Cowdenbeath	20	9	4	7	30	23	31	7
Berwick	18	8	5	5	27	16	29	11
Forfar	17	7	7	3	30	19	28	11
Dumbarton	19	8	3	8	30	31	27	-1
Montrose	20	7	3	10	23	28	24	-5
East Stirling	18	6	4	8	16	21	22	-5
Brechin	19	5	3	11	22	31	18	-9
Albion	19	3	5	11	19	39	14	-20

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE - ROUND SIXTEEN

GIPPSLAND FALCONS v BRISBANE STRIKERS

1 Bojo Jevdjovic	1 Clint Bolton
2 Dean Fak	2 Glenn Gwynne
3 Manny Gotis	3 Shane Stefanutto
4 Mehmed Durakovic	4 Andrew Davidson
5 Jeff Hopkins	5 Matthew Baill
6 Brian MacNichol	6 Brad Dittan
7 Andy Vargas	7 Shane Smeltz
8 Clayton Bell	8 David Pilic
9 Robbie Puca	9 Paul Foster
10 Sandy Robertson	10 Wayne Srhoj
11 John Hutchinson	11 Greg Di Losa
12 Peter Kakos	12 Pete Dwyer
13 Adrian Savage	13 Stuart McClaren
14 Doug Marclina	14 Jade North
15 Jonathon Buhuglar	15 Leo Langone
16 Juan Nilo	16 Peter Grierson
17 Will Hastie	17 Jeromy Harris
18 Michael Katz	18 Nick Meredith
19 Ivan Mandic	19 Wade Baldwin
20 Simon Miotto	20 Daniel Duke

Venue: Falcons Stadium - Saturday 15 January 2000 7.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 16 Falcons wins: 6 Strikers wins: 6 Draws 4
 Last Week: Falcons 1-0 away loss to Glory
 Strikers 4-0 home win over Knights

WOLLONGONG WOLVES v CARLTON

1 Leslie Pogliacomi	1 Dean Anastasiadis
2 George Souris	2 Dave McPherson
3 Alvin Ceccoli	3 Craig Deans
4 Robert Stanton	4 Simon Colosimo
5 David Cervinksi	5 Sean Douglas
6 Matthew Horsley	6 Andrew Marth
7 Paul Reid	7 Stuart Slater
8 Anthony Surjan	8 Mark Atkinson
9 Sasho Dimoski	9 Alex Moreira
10 Stuart Young	10 Lubo Lapsansky
11 Scott Chipperfield	11 Archie Thompson
12 Neil Harlock	12 Mike Conroy
13 Noel Spencer	13 Steve Martin
14 Saso Petrovski	14 John Markovski
15 David Huxley	15 Con Anthonopoulos
16 Peter Lahanas	16 David Terminello
17 Esala Masi	17 Joe Tricarico
18 Chad Bishop	18 David Della Rocca
19 Paul Dimech	19 Serdar Pir
20 Daniel Bertrame	20 Adrian Gagalj
21 Christian Zelvis	21 Andrew Packer
	22 Angelo Moutsopoulos
	23 Colin Azzopardi
	24 Joshua Kennedy

Venue: Brandon Park - Sunday 16 January 2000 5.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 4 wins: Wolves 1 Carlton wins: 3 Draws 0
 Last Week: Carlton 1-1 home draw with Kingz

TELECAST SUNDAY 8.30PM
C7 SPORT - CHANNEL 12

SYDNEY UNITED v SYDNEY OLYMPIC

1 John Crawley	1 Jim Kourtis
2 Ray Younis	2 Scott Thomas
3 Mark Rackar	3 Chris Zoricich
4 Vellmir Kupresak	4 Peter Tsekens
5 Eddie Bosnar	5 Scott Baillie
6 Vince Savocca	6 Ante Juric
7 Mirko Jurilj	7 Zlatko Arambasic
8 Nahuel Arrarte	8 Marcus Phillips
9 Marlo Jermen	9 Pablo Cardozo
10 Ante Moric	10 Brett Emerton
11 Tom Pondeljak	11 Chris Kalantzis
12 Tom Maric	12 Sebastian Sinozic
13 Matthew Zec	13
14 Kain Rastall	14 Gabriel Mendez
15 Aytec Genc	15 Lindsay Wilson
16 Joe Moric	17 Paul Kohler
17 Nick Bosevski	18 John Kyriazopoulos
18 Steve Bozinovski	19 Nick Carle
19 Greg Saric	20 George Bouhoutsos
20 Steve Tolios	21 Lee Miot
25 Ante Deak	22 Pete Zorbas
30 Brett Hughes	23 Dylan Macallister
	24 Norman Tome
	25 Hussein Jomaa
	26 Adam Ciantar
	30 John Karoubas

Venue: Sydney United Sports Centre - Sunday 16 January 2000 6.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 3 United: 1 Olympic wins: 2 Draws 0
 Last week: United 3-0 away loss to Spirit
 Olympic 3-2 away loss to Breakers

TELECAST SUNDAY 6.30PM
C7 SPORT - CHANNEL 12

MARCONI STALLIONS v CANBERRA COSMOS

1 Michael Turnbull	1 David Millin
2 Chad Gibson	2 Toplica Popovich
3 Mark Babic	3 Danny Burt
4	4 Nicholas Purdue
5 Dominic Longo	5 Jason Polak
6 Pan-Kaum Kim	6 David Winnie
7 Christian Care	7 Daniel Watkins
8 Darren McDonald	8 Alex Castro
9 Zeljko Babic	9 Michael Musitano
10 Brad Maloney	10 David Arranz
11 Mike Smith	11 Brian Hamilton
12	12 Harry James
13 Danny Invincible	13 Glen Kolpak
14 Buddy Farah	14 Ilija Prenzosi
15 Pierluigi di Gia	15 Robbie Hooker
16 Alex Duric	16 Nikola Mrdja
17 Francis Awaritefe	17 Geoff Howarth
18 Harry Karl	18 Grant Barlow
19 Brendan Ranaud	19 Scott Conlon
20 David Aceski	20 Elliot Zwangobani
21 Paolo Marchesini	21 PJ Roberts
22 Kris Trajanovski	22 Ivo De Jesus
23 Vlado Zoric	23 Gabriel Gonzalez
24 Josaja Junior Sauturaga	24 Angelo Konstantinou
25	
26 Daniel Severino	

Venue: Marconi Stadium - Sunday 16 January 2000 6.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 9 Marconi wins: 8 Cosmos wins: 0 Draws 1
 Last week: Marconi v Power postponed
 Cosmos 1-0 away loss to Force

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS v ADELAIDE FORCE

1 Joey Rayher	1 Vilson Knezevic
2 Ivan Jolic	2 Ivan Zelic
3 Ante Kovacevic	3
4 Jason Vukadin	4 Alex Tobin
5 John Didulica	5 Carlo Talladira
6 Mark Silic	6 Damian Mori
7 Dragi Nastovski	7 Carl Veart
8 Ivan Kelic	8 Nick Sabljak
9 Paul Urolovic	9 Aurelio Vidmar
10 Mijo Trupkovic	10
11 Murtala Toyin Abbas	11 Nathan Day
12 Lance Plunkett	12 John Fusco
13 Paul Magdic	13 Michael Cartwright
14 Ransford Banini	14 Louis Brain (right)
15 Alex Kristzoglou	15 Matthew Kemp
16 Brandon Vassalo	16 Angelo Costanzo
17 Roddy Vargas	17 Bradley Hassell
18 Zlatko Maglic	18
19 Martin John	19
20 Zeljko Susa	20 Dong Ki Kim
21 Steven Tillinger	21
22 Michael Reis	22 Jonathan Lihou
23 Hrvoje Matkovic	23
24 Adrian Cervinski	
25	
30 Lupce Acevski	

Venue: Knights Stadium - Sunday 16 January 2000 6.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 7 Knights wins: 4 Force wins: 2 Draws 1
 Last week: Knights 4-0 away loss to Strikers
 Force 1-0 home win over Cosmos



LIVE FRIDAY 14 JANUARY 7.30 PM
C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

NORTHERN SPIRIT



V PERTH GLORY



SPIRIT

- 1 John Perosh
- 2 Robert Enes
- 3 Matthew Langdon (right)
- 4 Matthew Bingley
- 5 Mark Rudan
- 6 Luke Casserley
- 7 Robbie Slater
- 8 Tony Perinich
- 9 David Seal
- 10
- 11 Troy Cranney
- 12 Simon Catanzaro
- 13 Philip Moss
- 14 Shane Lyons
- 15 Anthony Farla
- 16
- 17 Paul Bilokapic
- 18 Paul Wearne
- 19 Graham Arnold
- 20 Jess Van Stratten
- 21 Michael Cunliffe
- 22 Paul Henderson
- 23 Adam Snyder
- 24 Elvis Olic
- 25 Ryan Griffiths
- 26 Jack Sobczyk
- 27 Adam Griffiths
- 28 Abbas Saad
- 29 Ian Crook
- 30 Sean Cranney



GLORY

- 1 Danny Milosevic
- 2 Robert Trajkovski
- 3 Jamie Harnwell
- 4
- 5 Vinko Buljbasic
- 6 Gareth Naven
- 7 Scott Miller
- 8 Troy Halpin
- 9 Alistair Edwards
- 10 Bobby Despotoski
- 11 Kasey Wehrman
- 12 Peter Buljan
- 13 James Afkos
- 14 Dion Valle
- 15 Edgar Junior
- 16 Con Boutsianis (right)
- 17 Vas Kalogeracos
- 18 Hamilton Thorp
- 19 John Carbone
- 20 Tony Franken
- 21 Ivan Ergic
- 22 Jason Petkovic
- 23 Ljubo Milicevic



Venue: North Sydney Oval
Friday 14 January 7.30PM



Head to Head: Played 2 Spirit wins: 1 Glory wins: 1 Draws 0

Last Week: Spirit : 3-0 home win over Sydney United Glory: 1-0 home win over Falcons

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